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Scripture portions for the  
afflicted, especially the











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**SCRIPTURE PORTIONS**

**FOR**

**THE AFFLICTED,**

**ESPECIALLY THE SICK;**

**WITH**

**REFLECTIONS FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS.**

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## PREFACE.

THE afflicted are frequently unable to read much, or bear much to be read to them. The Bible, at such a time, is most “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Passages selected from the sacred pages, with hints on them to show their bearings, and set the thoughts in motion, cannot therefore be inappropriate; and the reflections of those devout men, who have seriously and laboriously weighed them, are likely to prove peculiarly acceptable. The additional remarks of experimental Christians, several of which are from the lips of the dying, are calculated to afford great encouragement and direction, as they will show, in the most convincing manner, that what the text and the comment enforce, many

have, by the aid of God's grace and Spirit, both experienced and practised. Nor can the poetical reflections be unseasonable; many of them have already solaced the hours of affliction, and are peculiarly adapted for "songs in the night." May the Divine blessing make this little work a blessing to the wounded in spirit, to guide them to Him, who, when He was upon earth, "healed all manner of sicknesses and all manner of diseases among the people." "Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord, and teachest him out of thy law," Psalm xciv. 12.

# SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

FOR

## THE AFFLICTED.

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GENESIS, xlii. 36.

And Jacob their father said unto them, Me have ye bereaved of my children: Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away: all these things are against me.

AND yet God was not only carrying on great designs by the means Jacob so much disliked, for the advancement of his family, but was laying the foundation of a glorious scene of providence, the memorial of which will last as long as the Bible. We often pass a wrong sentence concerning this or that providence, and, in our haste, say things that are very unjust, and afterwards see reason to make a recantation.—BENJAMIN BENNET.

Oh what rare mercies often lie hid under some dark and afflicting providence, even while they are at our hand, and are not seen, from the frowardness of an embittered spirit,

that will not let its own eyes see the advantage of such a case; but, as if they did well to be angry against God, men will quarrel more for his crossing their humour, than observe his tenderness for promoting their real good, and cry against Him because He will not undo them!—FLEMING.

As in a clock, one motion doth convey  
 And carry divers wheels a several way;  
 Yet altogether, by the great wheel's force,  
 Direct the hand unto his proper course:  
 Even so that sacred will, although it use  
 Means seeming contrary, yet all conduce  
 To one effect, and, in a free consent,  
 They bring to pass Heaven's high decreed intent.

QUARLES.

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GENESIS, xlvii. 9.

And Jacob said unto Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.

This is not the language of discontent or unthankfulness, but the serious reflection of one who felt the vanity of the world, and saw



nothing here to make him desirous of a longer abode in it. Shall not we also make the same estimate of human life? Is it not “a pilgrimage?” And does not the whole of our situation here admonish us to “seek a better country, that is, a heavenly?” Seventy or eighty years may seem a considerable space while it is future, but it passeth away “as a tale that is told.” It should also be remembered, that, short as our existence is, it is sadly embittered with calamities, and stained with sin. Take, then, “the picture of earth’s happiest man,” when he is quitting the present scene of things, and you will justly conclude, “FEW AND EVIL have his days been.”—  
THOMAS ROBINSON.

Well, if ye must be sad and few,  
Run on, my days, in haste;  
Moments of sin, and months of wo,  
Ye cannot fly too fast.

Let heavenly love prepare my soul,  
And call her to the skies,  
Where years of long salvation roll,  
And glory never dies.

WATTS.

## DEUTERONOMY, viii. 5.

Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.

God is a loving, tender Father to all his children; yet, when there is occasion, they shall feel the smart of his rod. Israel did so: they were chastened that they might not be condemned; chastened with the rod of men; not as a man wounds and slays his enemies, whose destruction he aims at, but as a man chasteneth his son, whose happiness and welfare he designs.—M. HENRY.

Kind, loving is the hand that strikes,  
However keen the smart,  
If sorrow's discipline can chase  
One evil from the heart.

FRY.

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1 SAMUEL, iii. 18.

It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good.

When we receive evil at the hands of men, we may, ordinarily at least, justly complain of it. It may be they had no good intention in afflicting us; or they had no right to afflict

and grieve us: they are both unkind and injurious in what they do. But this cannot be said of the blessed God. He is the Lord, the great Sovereign of the world; and whenever he brings sufferings upon us, he hath a right to do what he doth, and we owe him a full submission. This we should consider on all such occasions, and endeavour to see his hand, and be still and quiet under it.—BENJAMIN BENNET.

It is the Lord—enthroned in light,  
Whose claims are all divine;  
Who has an undisputed right  
To govern me and mine.

It is the Lord—should I distrust,  
Or contradict his will,  
Who cannot do but what is just,  
And must be righteous still?

It is the Lord—whose matchless skill  
Can, from afflictions, raise  
Matter eternity to fill  
With ever-growing praise.

T. GREENE.

## 2 SAMUEL, XXIV. 14.

And David said unto Gad, I am in a great strait: let us fall now into the hand of the Lord; for his mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man.

When did he look for mercy? Even when the Lord was resolved to afflict him. David did not say his mercies are great, when he gives me wealth, riches, and honour; when he gives deliverance, and works salvation for his people; but when he is smiting his people, and consuming them with the dreadful pestilence. The woundings of God have more kindness in them than the kisses of many men. Man seldom shows pity to those who are smitten, but how rarely doth he show pity while he is smiting, or mingle mercy with his justice! God usually exerciseth sparing mercy towards his enemies; and he always doth it towards his whole people, against whom he never suffers his own displeasure to arise, though he be often provoked by them, and displeased with them.—CARYL.

Give to our God immortal praise,  
Mercy and truth are all his ways;  
Wonders of grace to God belong:  
Repeat his mercies in your song.

DR. WATTS.

## 2 KINGS, i. 2.

Go, enquire—whether I shall recover of this disease.

We should be more thoughtful what will become of us after death, than how or when we shall die; and more desirous to be told how we may carry ourselves well in our sickness, and get good to our souls by it, than whether we shall recover from it or not.—

M. HENRY.

If light attends the course I run,  
'Tis God provides those rays;  
And 'tis his hand that hides my sun  
If darkness cloud my days.

Yet I would not be much concern'd,  
Nor vainly long to see  
The volume of his deep decrees,  
What months are writ for me.

When he reveals the book of life,  
O may I read my name  
Amongst the chosen of his love,  
The followers of the Lamb!

DR. WATTS.

## 2 CHRONICLES, XVI. 12.

And Asa, in the thirty and ninth year of his reign, was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians.

His making use of physicians was his duty; but trusting to them, and expecting that from them which was to be had from God only, was his sin and folly. The help of creatures must always be used with an eye to the Creator, and in dependence upon Him, who makes every creature that to us which it is, and without whom the most skilful and faithful are physicians of no value.—M. HENRY.

My flesh is hastening to decay,  
 Soon shall the world have passed away;  
 But what can mortal friends avail,  
 When heart, and strength, and life shall fail?

But oh! be Thou, my Saviour, nigh,  
 And I will triumph while I die;  
 My strength, my portion, is divine,  
 And Jesus is for ever mine!



## 2 CHRONICLES, XXXII. 24, 25.

In those days Hezekiah was sick to the death, and prayed unto the Lord: and he spake unto him, and he

gave him a sign. But Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him; for his heart was lifted up: therefore there was wrath upon him, and upon Judah and Jerusalem.

It is justly expected that they that have received mercy from God, should study to make some suitable returns for the mercies they have received; and if they do not, their ingratitude will certainly be charged upon them. Though we cannot render an equivalent or the payment of a debt, we must render the acknowledgment of a favour. What shall I render that may be so accepted? Psalm, cxvi. 12.—M. HENRY.

“Hezekiah rendered not again according to the benefit done him.”

Lord, what is man! Who is beyond the danger of falling while he is in this world? On what can we safely rely? He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool. And he is not much better that trusts in his own grace. It is not our grace, but His grace, that is sufficient for us. Let us, therefore, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.—W. JAY.

## JOB, i. 22.

In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.

When God charges many men home, then they presently charge God foolishly. They put him to bear the brunt and blame of all; but this will be bitterness in the end. When thou art under affliction, thou mayest humbly tell God that thou feelest his hand heavy; but thou must not blame him because his hand is heavy. No man hath ever been able to make good a charge against God: and wilt thou be able? Surely, no. By charging God foolishly in the day of thy calamity, thou dost but provoke the Lord to charge thee through and through, more fiercely and furiously, with his most deadly darts of renewed misery. It is thy greatest wisdom to blame thy sins, and lay thy hand upon thy mouth; for why should folly charge innocence? That man is far enough off from being mute and silent under the hand of God, who dares charge God himself for laying his hand upon him.—BROOKS.

A soul impatient under affliction, is like the devil in his chains, who rages against God while he is fettered by him. The Spirit of Christ sweetly calms the soul of a suffering



believer, not by taking away all sense of pain, but by overcoming it with the sense of his love.—GURNALL.

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## JOB, II. 3.

Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth.

Unparalleled saint, who endured such a succession of tragical events with humility and submission! The active holiness of his prosperous life is not recorded with such a note of eminency and admiration as his patient sufferings, for which he is universally crowned with the praises of the saints in all ages. “Ye have heard of the patience of Job!” He is a spectacle that draws the regard of all, more famous for his patience than his misery.—Take away from Job the Chaldean and Sabeen robbers; the shower of fire that consumed his estate; the whirlwind, raised by infernal spirits, that destroyed his children; his diseases, and his cruel wife; then the exercises of his insuperable patience, and the honourable remembrance of Job is lost. If the prince of darkness had not tried all his arts and strength to

overcome him, and had not been foiled in his attempts, his graces had not been so illustrious.—DR. BATES.

Thus the trial of Job's faith was found to his praise and honour, 1 Peter, i. 7. Constancy crowns integrity.—M. HENRY.

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JOB, ii. 10.

What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?

There is nothing that doth more concern our peace and comfort in this world, and, indeed, nothing doth more constitute our happiness—at least that degree of it which we may hope for in this present state—than a mind suited to, and comporting with the providence of God in all the variety thereof; that knows not only how to receive good, but evil, at the hand of the Lord, as he shall please to dispense the one or the other. When this is our temper, nothing can come amiss to us; we have then our feet shod, and armour on, and may pass through all the changes and turns of Providence unhurt.—BENJAMIN BENNET.

O believer, let not thy afflictions cause thee

to bury thy mercies in oblivion. Has not God brought thee from Satan's family, and put thee among his children; and wilt thou forget or undervalue that honour? Hath he struck off thy fetters, taken off thy prison garments, and set thee at liberty; and wilt thou be unthankful? Hath he given thee Christ for thy treasure and portion, and entitled thee to his unsearchable riches; and wilt thou be discontented? Hath he given thee the graces of his Spirit, which are more precious than rubies; and wilt thou quarrel when he smites in some earthly things? Hath he made thee an heir of glory, and provided eternal mansions above for thee; and wilt thou be fretful for want of some trifles here?—WILLISON.

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JOB, v. 6.

Affliction cometh not forth of the dust, neither doth trouble spring out of the ground.

We must not attribute our afflictions to fortune, for they are from God; nor our sins to fate, for they are from ourselves: so that whatever trouble we are in, we must own that God sends it upon us, and we procure it to our-

selves. The former is a reason why we should be very patient, the latter why we should be very penitent, when we are afflicted.—M. HENRY.

Not from the dust affliction grows,  
Nor troubles rise by chance;  
Yet we are born to care and woes,  
A sad inheritance.

As sparks break out from burning coals,  
And still are upwards borne;  
So grief is rooted in our souls,  
And man grows up to mourn.

Yet with my God I leave my cause,  
And trust his promis'd grace;  
He rules me by his well-known laws  
Of love and righteousness.

Not all the pains that ere I bore  
Shall spoil my future peace,  
For death and hell can do no more  
Than what my Father please.

DR. WATTS.

## JOB, v. 17.

Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore, despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty.

There is no happiness in affliction, naturally considered; it is from certain circumstances connected with afflictions that happiness is associated with them. Affliction, in itself, is grievous, and it would be only so to us, did not the overruling, admirable dispensations of God, temper, order, dispose, and work it to an end above its own nature. It is the art and wisdom of the physician which corrects poisonous simples and ingredients, so as to make them medicinal: and did not the wisdom and goodness of God correct our corrections, they would not be medicine to us, but poison. It is not correction, but the hand of God with it and in it which makes us happy.—CARYL.

O Lord our God! rather than that this saviour of the body of death should rest upon us, or that we should live without fear of thy blessed name, and be still knit to our sins; empty us, O our heavenly Father! from vessel to vessel; let thy kind hand be upon us, to awaken us, purify us with fire, smite us with

a rod! Yet, at the same time, remember, gracious God, thy promise to the Son of David—  
‘I will chasten him with the rod of man: but my mercy shall not depart from him.’—ROWLAND.

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JOB, vii. 3.

Wearisome nights are appointed for me.

If wearisome nights be our portion, let us remember they are “appointed” for us. Let us mitigate the grievance of watchfulness, by considering it as a sort of prolongation of life; as the gift of more minutes granted for meditation and prayer. If we are not able to employ it to either of these purposes, there is a fresh occasion for exercising that resignation which will be accepted for both.—MRS. HANNAH MORE.

O Lord! my best desires fulfil;  
And help me to resign  
Life, health, and comfort to thy will,  
And make thy pleasure mine.

Why should I shrink at thy command,  
Whose love forbids my fears?

Or tremble at thy gracious hand  
That wipes away my tears?

Thy favour all my journey through,  
Thou art engaged to grant;  
What else I want, or think I do,  
'Tis better still to want.

COWPER.

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JOB, vii. 17, 18.

What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? And that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him? And that thou shouldest visit him every morning, and try him every moment?

God's strokes are often the magnifyings and exaltings of man. He sets his heart upon man, while he inflicts the smart of his rod: he shows thereby what a high account he makes of him, and what a special affection he bears to him. When he might treat us with more severity after the breach of his covenant, and make his jealousy flame out against us in furious methods, he will not destroy his relation to us, and leave us to our own inclinations, but deal with us as a father with his children; and when he takes this course with us, it is when it cannot be avoided without our ruin.

His goodness would not suffer him to do it, if our badness did not force him to it.—

CHARNOCK.

Sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions.—DYER.

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JOB, vii. 20.

I am a burden to myself.

This is sometimes the language of the afflicted. Thus it was the exclamation of Job. If we cannot approve of the strength of his complaint, we hardly know how to condemn it. God himself overlooks it, and only holds him forth as an example of patience. All sufferers cannot, indeed, say truly, as he did, “My stroke is heavier than my groaning.” Yet the heart’s bitterness is known only to itself. We cannot determine the pressure of another’s mind under suffering: for the feeling of affliction may be actually much greater than we should have supposed from the degree of it. But afflictions may be great in themselves, from their number, and frequency, and suddenness, and subject. Is this thy case? Yield not to impatience and despondency. Such afflictions have often introduced a train



of mercies; and the valley of Achor (trouble) has been a door of hope. How many in heaven, how many on earth, are now thanking God for their trials! He knows how to deliver. Say,—“Lord, I am oppressed; undertake for me.” “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.”—JAY.

Lord, I am pained; but I resign  
My body to thy will;  
'Tis grace, 'tis wisdom all divine,  
Appoints the pains I feel.

Dark are thy ways of providence,  
While they who love thee groan;  
Thy reasons lie conceal'd from sense,  
Mysterious and unknown.

Yet nature may have leave to speak,  
And plead before her God,  
Lest the o'erburdened heart should break  
Beneath thine heavy rod.

DR. WATTS.

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JOB, x. 2.

Show me wherefore thou contendest with me.

Discover to me whether it be for sin or no,  
or whether to exercise some grace; whether

to discover me to myself, or to manifest thyself to me in a way of sovereignty and majesty; to teach me to be humble, to learn the lesson thou wouldest teach me. If we pray that God would discover to us the reason of our afflictions, we ought to lay our souls open and search them, and see where the light of the Spirit of God directs us to discover sin. If we have any guilt that is manifest to our consciences by his providence under afflictions, let us endeavour to pursue this discovery, and see whether it be not the true reason of God's contention; for it is by such methods as this that God's Spirit often reveals sin to us.—DR. WATTS.



## JOB, xiii. 15.

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.

To believe mercy in the midst of mercy, is no great matter; but to believe mercy in the midst of wrath, is a great matter, and argues strong faith. A time of contradiction is a time for faith. To believe the promise when Providence seems to contradict the promise in appearance, this is like Abraham, to

be strong in faith, giving glory to God. Under a sense of guilt to believe pardon; under a sense and feeling of wrath to believe mercy, and plead that God would remember mercy, is the very season for faith to act; and then God gets the glory of his mercy, and we the good of it.—RALPH ERSKINE.

Never was there a man of deep piety who has not been brought into extremities, who has not been put into the fire, who has not been taught to say, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in him!"—CECIL.

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JOB, xiv. 1.

Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

It is well they are so few, since so evil: as our relations and comforts are multiplied, so are the occasions of our sorrow. God never intended the world to be a place of our rest, but our exercise: it is a middle place between heaven and hell, and hath somewhat of either. In our passage to the other world we must look for trouble, it is that we are born to. Many are born to great honour and estate,

but they have another portion goeth along with it—they are born to trouble: ever since sin entered into the world, punishment entered with it. In heaven, full of days, full of comforts; but here it is otherwise—few days and full of trouble.—DR. MANTON.

Affliction then is ours;  
We are the trees, whom shaking fastens more,  
While blustering winds destroy the wanton bowers,  
And ruffle all their curious knots and store.

My God, so temper joy and wo,  
That thy bright beams may tame thy bow.

HERBERT.

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JOB, XXIII. 10.

But He knoweth the way that I take; when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.

He who before was reputed but as dross, and had much dross in him, comes out of the trial as gold, and loseth nothing of his weight, worth, or beauty, by being tried; he only loseth—a good loss—his dross, and the rubbish of his corruptions. Grace is not only grace still, but more gracious, even glorious after trial. Afflictions are to us as we are;

those that go gold into the furnace, will come out no worse.—CARYL.—M. HENRY.

There can be no gold or silver finely wrought without being first purified with fire; no elegant houses built of stones, till the hammers have squared and smoothed them. So we can neither become vessels of honour in the house of our Father, till we are melted in the furnace of affliction; nor lively stones in the walls of the New Jerusalem, till the hand of the Lord hath beaten off our proud excrescences and empty tumours with his own hammers.—ROWLAND.

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JOB, XXXIV. 23.

For He will not lay upon man more than right; that he should enter into judgment with God.

That is, the party afflicted hath no just complaint against God, can take no exception against God's proceedings, for he perfectly understands our need, and understands our strength. God perfectly understands our need: "If need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations," 1 Pet. i. 6; and understands our strength: Faithful is He, "who

will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able," 1 Cor. x. 13. Many parents do not correct their children in measure, being ignorant of their nature and disposition. Many physicians mistake their patients' constitutions, therefore the physic may work too strongly and too violently for them; but God understands our need, and our strength, and so suits all his remedies accordingly.—DR. MANTON.

Thy ways, O Lord, with wise design,  
Are framed upon thy throne above;  
And every dark or bending line,  
Meets in the centre of thy love.

With feeble light, and half obscure,  
Poor mortals thy arrangements view,  
Not knowing that the least are sure,  
The most mysterious, just and true.

CHRISTIAN PSALMIST.



JOB, xxxiv. 31.

Surely it is meet to be said unto God, I have borne chastisement, I will not offend any more.

The speaking this unto God under affliction, signifies that our affliction is from his hand.

Though trouble be the general lot of mankind, yet it doth not come by an improvidential fatality. Though man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward, yet it comes not out of the dust. It is no less true, and in itself no less clear, that all the good we enjoy, and all the evil we suffer, comes from the same hand; but we are naturally more sensible of evil than of good, and therefore do more readily reflect upon the original and cause of it. Our distresses lead us unto the notice of the righteous God inflicting them, and our own unrighteous ways procuring them, and provoking him so to do; and therefore it is meet to speak in this submissive, humble language to him. It is by all means necessary to speak to him; he is the party we have to do with, or speak to, even in those afflictions whereof men are the visible causes; they are, indeed, but instrumental causes; the rod and staff is in his hand that smite us, therefore our business is with him, in whose supreme hand alone is the mitigation and increase, the continuance and the ending of our trouble. Who gave Jacob to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, against whom we have sinned? The yoke of my transgressions is bound on by

his hand, therefore it is altogether necessary, in all afflictions, to speak to him; and, as it is necessary to speak to him, it is meet to speak thus to him: "I have borne chastisement, I will no more offend." These words have in them the true composition of real repentance, humble submission, and holy resolution:—"I have *borne* chastisement," that is, I have justly borne it, and do heartily submit to it; I bear it justly, and take it well: Lord, I acquit thee, and accuse myself!—

This is a kind of language that makes the rod fall out of God's hand. That prayer ascends highest that comes from the lowest depth of an humbled heart. But God resists the proud. He proclaims himself an enemy to pride and stiffness of spirit, but his grace seeks the humble heart, as water does the low ground.—LEIGHTON.

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JOB, XXXIV. 33.

Should it be according to thy mind?

Must we always have the good we have a mind to enjoy? We should then wrongfully encroach upon others, and foolishly ensnare ourselves. Must we never be afflicted, because



we have no mind to it? Is it fit that sinners should feel no smart, that scholars should be under no discipline? Or, if we must be afflicted, is it fit we should choose what rod we will be beaten with? No; it is fit every thing should be according to God's mind, and not ours, for he is the Creator, and we are creatures; he is infinitely wise and knowing, we are foolish and short-sighted; he is in one mind, we are in many.—M. HENRY.

Since all the downward tracks of time  
God's watchful eye surveys,  
Oh! who so wise to choose our lot,  
And regulate our ways.

Good when he gives, supremely good,  
Nor less when he denies;  
E'en crosses from his sovereign hand,  
Are blessings in disguise.

HERVEY.

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JOB, XXXV. 10.

But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night?

What sweet songs have suffering saints found in the darkest nights of their affliction!

What inward peace in outward troubles!  
What soul freedom in bodily restraint! What  
is a song in the night? It is joy in time of  
trouble. Whenever God gives a soul joy in  
time of trouble, he gives a song in the night.—  
CARYL.

When our condition is ever so dark, and  
sad, and melancholy, there is that in God—in  
his providence, and promise—which is suffi-  
cient not only to support us, but to fill us with  
joy and consolation, and enable us in every  
thing to give thanks, and even to rejoice in  
tribulation. When we only pore upon the  
afflictions we are under, and neglect the con-  
solations of God which are treasured up for  
us, it is just with God to reject our prayers.—  
M. HENRY.

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PSALM vi. 1.

O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten  
me in thy hot displeasure.

These words speak the language of a heart  
truly humbled under humbling providences,  
of a broken and contrite spirit under great  
afflictions, sent on purpose to awaken con-

science and mortify corruption. Those heap up wrath who cry not when God binds them; but those are getting ready for mercy, who, under God's rebukes, sow in tears.—M. HENRY.

Lo, thou hast troubled my repose,  
Thy chastisements I feel;  
Thine hand hath touched my heart—it glows—  
It melts—impress thy seal.

MONTGOMERY.

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PSALM vi. 2.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me, for my bones are vexed.

Though David was a king, yet he was sick and pained: his imperial crown would not keep his head from aching. Great men are men, and subject to the calamities of human life. Though David was a stout man, a man of war from his youth, yet that will not secure him from distempers, which will soon make even the strong men bow themselves. Though David was a good man, yet neither will his goodness keep him in health: “Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.” Let

this help to reconcile us to pain and sickness, that it has been the lot of some of the best saints, and that we are directed and encouraged by their example, to show before God our trouble in that case, who is for the body, and takes cognizance of its ailments.—M. HENRY.

Should pain o'er my weak flesh prevail,  
And fevers boil within my breast,  
And heart, and strength, and reason fail,  
Be yet, my soul, on Jesus cast.

In every trial let me be  
Supplied with all-sufficient grace,  
My spirit calmly stay'd on thee,  
And sweetly kept in perfect peace.

BERRIDGE.

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PSALM VI. 5.

For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who shall give thee thanks?

Lord, if thou deliver me, and comfort me, I will not only give thee thanks for my deliverance, and stir up others to join with me in these thanksgivings, but I will spend the new life thou shalt entrust me with in thy service, to thy glory; and all the remainder

of my days preserve a grateful remembrance of thy favours to me, and be quickened thereby in all instances of service to thee.—M. HENRY.

Look, how the powers of nature mourn,  
How long, Almighty God, how long?  
When shall thine hour of grace return?  
When shall I make thy grace my song?

I feel my flesh so near the grave,  
My thoughts are tempted to despair;  
But graves can never praise the Lord,  
For all is dust and silence there.

Depart, ye tempters, from my soul,  
And all despairing thoughts depart;  
My God, who hears my humble moan,  
Will ease my flesh, and cheer my heart.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM IX. 10.

And they that know thy name will put their trust in thee: for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.

Therefore, they who “know God’s name,” that is, who are acquainted with, and have experienced his merciful nature and disposi-

tion expressed in that name, will take no unlawful methods to escape affliction, nor “put their trust” in any but “him” for deliverance; since it is a most undoubted truth—and oh, what a comfortable truth—that “thou, Lord Jesus, hast not forsaken,” nor ever wilt finally “forsake them that” sincerely and diligently, with their whole heart, “seek” to “thee” for help; as a child, upon apprehension of danger, flies to the arms of its tender and indulgent parent.—BP. HORNE.

God never did, and never will, disown or desert any that seek to him and trust in him. Though he afflict them, he doth not leave them comfortless: though he seem to forsake them for a while, yet he will gather them with everlasting mercies.—M. HENRY.

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## PSALM XVI. 4.

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god.

This all ungodly men do when they are afflicted: they run to other imaginary helps of their own, and they prove but the multipliers of sorrows, and add to their torment.

They are miserable or troublesome comforters; like unskilful physicians, that add to the patient's pain by nauseous, ill-chosen, and, it may be, pernicious drugs.—ABP. LEIGHTON.

This God is the God we adore,  
Our faithful, unchangeable Friend,  
Whose love is as large as his power,  
And neither knows measure nor end:

'Tis Jesus, the first and the last,  
Whose Spirit shall guide me safe home;  
I'll praise him for all that is past,  
And trust him for all that's to come.

HART.

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PSALM xxiii. 4.

Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

Not only the supporting staff, but the correcting rod shall comfort, if God command it to be a comforter. Who would not maintain communion with this God, who can make a comfort of any thing, who can answer every cross with a comfort? If we have a thousand crosses, God hath ten thousand comforts: he can multiply comforts faster than the world can multiply crosses.—CARYL.

Though Heaven afflicts, I'll not repine,  
Each heart-felt comfort still is mine;  
Comforts that shall o'er death prevail,  
And journey with me through the vale.

Dear Jesus, smooth that rugged way,  
And lead me to the realms of day,  
To milder skies and lighter plains,  
Where everlasting sunshine reigns.

COTTON.

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PSALM XXV. 18.

Look upon mine affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.

When at any time we are in trouble, we should be more concerned about our sins, to get them pardoned, than about our afflictions, to get them removed.—M. HENRY.

O Thou, from whom all goodness flows,  
I lift my heart to thee;  
In all my sorrows, conflicts, woes,  
Dear Lord, remember me!

When, groaning, on my burden'd heart  
My sins lie heavily,  
My pardon speak, new peace impart,  
In love, remember me!



Temptations sore obstruct my way,  
And ills I cannot flee;  
Oh! give me strength, Lord, as my day,  
For good remember me!

Distress with pain, disease, and grief,  
This feeble body see,  
Grant patience, rest, and kind relief;  
Hear, and remember me.

DR. HAWEIS.

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PSALM XXX. 2.

O Lord my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

In every age Jehovah has been known as the Healer of his people; and, both in mental and bodily maladies, they have sought and found his aid. What an advantage would it be to human beings, were they as sensitively conscious of the diseases of the soul, as they are of the afflictions of the perishable body! Then how precious would be the name of Him, who is emphatically the Physician of souls. How blessed is he who can appeal to Jehovah, as his God, and say, from the deeply cherished experience of his heart,—“Thou hast healed me.”—DR. MORISON.

Amidst these various scenes of ills,  
Each stroke some kind design fulfils ;  
And, shall I murmur at my God,  
When sovereign love directs the rod ?

Peace, rebel thoughts !—I'll not complain ;  
My Father's smiles suspend my pain ;  
Smiles, that a thousand joys impart,  
And pour the balm that heals the smart.

COTTON.

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PSALM XXX. 5.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

Many a good man hath carried his afflictions with him to the grave. It is most true, also, that our weeping is but for a night, yea, but for a moment, as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. iv. 17, compared with that morning of joy when the day of our blessed eternity shall begin. The psalm hath this scope, chiefly to show the troubles of the saints are not everlasting, not that they are never lasting; or, to show that the night of weeping shall at last conclude in a morning of joy to the godly, not that their night of weeping shall presently conclude. For, as some have only a sum-

mer's night, or a short night of sorrow, so others have a winter's night, or a long night of sorrow. And this night of sorrow may be as long, not only as many natural days, or as some years, but as long as all the natural days and years of this present life. The morning of joy is not to be understood of the next morrow after the sorrow began; for how long soever our weeping continues, it is night with us, and whensoever joy comes, though at midnight, it is morning with us.—CARYL.

Oft have I sat in secret sighs  
 To feel my flesh decay,  
 Then groan'd aloud, with frighted eyes,  
 To view the tott'ring clay.

But I forbid my sorrows now,  
 Nor dares the flesh complain;  
 Diseases bring their profit too;  
 The joy o'ercomes the pain.

DR. WATTS' LYRICS.

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PSALM XXXI. 15.

My times are in thy hand.

If they were in the enemies' hands, we should never be out of trouble; if in our own,

we should never be in; if in our friends, their good will would be more than their ability: but my times are in Thy hands; my times of trouble, and times of waiting. And it is well that they are in God's hands, for he hath a day, and a certain day, and a fit day, to answer the waiting of all his people; and when that day is come, you see how their hearts are enlarged, they will say, "This is the Lord, we have waited for him."—SIBBS.

My times of sorrow and of joy,  
Great God, are in thy hand;  
My choicest comforts come from thee,  
And go at thy command.

If thou should'st take them all away,  
Yet would not I repine;  
Before they were possess'd by me,  
They were entirely thine.

Nor would I drop a murmuring word,  
Though the whole world were gone,  
But seek enduring happiness  
In thee, and thee alone.

BEDDOME.

## PSALM XXXII. 4.

For day and night thine hand was heavy upon me.

That hand, which, when pressing, was so heavy—when raising, is so sweet and powerful, Psalm xxxvii. 24; and, when scattering its blessings, so full and so ample, Psalm civ. 28; cxlv. 16. The psalmist would not at first be humbled by the confession of his iniquity, ver. 3; and therefore he is humbled by the weight of the hand of God. Oh, powerful hand! beyond all comparison more grievous than any other hand to press down, and more powerful to raise up.—ABP. LEIGHTON.

He holds all nature in his hand—  
That gracious hand, on which I live,  
Doth life, and time, and death command,  
And has immortal joys to give.

'Tis He supports this fainting frame;  
On him alone my hopes recline;  
The wond'rous glories of his name,  
How wide they spread! how bright they shine!

Infinite wisdom! boundless power!  
Unchanging faithfulness and love!  
Here let me trust while I adore,  
Nor from my refuge e'er remove.

STEELE.

## PSALM XXXIV. 17.

The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.

This text intimates that it is the constant practice of good people, when they are in distress, to cry unto God; and it is their constant comfort, that God hears them. M. HENRY.

Jehovah speaks the healing word,  
And no disease withstands;  
Fevers and plagues obey the Lord,  
And fly at his commands.

If half the strings of life should break,  
He can our frame restore;  
He casts our sins behind his back,  
And they are found no more.

DR. WATTS.

## PSALM XXXIV. 19.

Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.

It is God's prerogative to set us free. We break prison when we attempt to escape merely by our own means; therefore, either we shall have no deliverance, or no kindly one. God

hath delivered, doth deliver, and we trust will deliver. This must be sought out of God; God helping together with your prayers, 2 Cor. i. 10, 11. Prayer must fetch it out from God, or it is no kindly deliverance. Well, then, in our affliction we need to be often with God.—DR. MANTON.

I love the Lord; he heard my cries,  
 And pitied every groan:  
 Long as I live, when troubles rise,  
 I'll hasten to his throne.

I love the Lord; he bow'd his ear,  
 And chas'd my grief away;  
 O let my heart no more despair,  
 While I have breath to pray!

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM XXXVIII. 1.

Title.—A psalm of David, to bring to remembrance.

O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath; neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

We will suppose this psalm penned when David was sick and in pain, and then it teacheth us that times of sickness are times to bring to remembrance; to bring the sin to remembrance for which God contended with us; to

awaken our conscience to deal faithfully and plainly with us, and set our sins in order before us for our humiliation. “In the day of adversity, consider.” Or, we may suppose it penned after his recovery, but designed as a record of the convictions he was under, and the workings of his heart when he was in affliction, that, upon every review of this psalm, he might call to mind the good impressions then made upon him, and make a fresh improvement of them. To the same purpose was the writing of Hezekiah, when he had been sick. To put others in mind of the same things which he was himself mindful of, and to teach them what to think, and what to say; when they are sick and in affliction, let them think as he did, and speak as he did. He deprecates the wrath of God in his affliction. Those that would escape the wrath of God, must pray against that more than any outward affliction, and be content to bear any outward affliction while it comes from, and consists with the law of God.—M. HENRY.

Sickness is a dismal scourge to the ungodly, and a painful spur to the gracious. To the one it is the harbinger of terror and misery; but, to the other, a solemn remembrancer in-



deed, both of the vanity of all earthly things, and of the nearer and nearer approach of immortal glory.—SERLE.

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## PSALM XXXVIII. 6—8.

I am troubled : I am bowed down greatly ; I go mourning all the day long. For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease : [or a scorching or burning, that is, a fever:] and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am feeble and sore broken : I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

If such be the effects of sin in this life, and upon those who are still the favourites of Heaven, what will be its effects in the life to come, and upon those who are left to wither forever beneath the Divine frown? Oh, let us learn, ere it be too late, that sin is an evil and bitter thing.—DR. MORISON.

Return, O Holy Dove, return,

Sweet Messenger of rest!

I hate the sins that made thee mourn,

And drove thee from my breast.

COWPER.

## PSALM XXXIX. 4.

Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am.

Lord, give me to consider how frail I am; how scanty the stock of life is; and how faint the spirits, which are as the oil to keep the lamp burning. We find, by daily experience, that the earthly house of this tabernacle is mouldering, and going to decay. Lord, make us to consider this, that we may secure mansions in the house not made with hands.—M. HENRY.

Almighty Maker of my frame,  
Teach me the measure of my days!  
Teach me to know how frail I am,  
And spend the remnant to thy praise."

MRS. STEELE.

## PSALM XXXIX. 7.

And now, Lord, what wait I for? my hope is in thee.

Hope is the great stock of believers; it is that which upholds them under all the faintings and sorrows of their mind in this life, and in their going "through the valley of the

shadow of death.” It is the “helmet of their salvation,” which, while they are looking over to eternity, beyond this present time, covers and keeps their head safe amidst all the darts that fly round about them. In the present discomfort and darkness of mind, and the saddest hours they meet with in this life, hope is that which keeps up the soul, and is that which David cheered up his soul with: “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance,” Psalm xlii. 5. And, even in this point, the “children of the world” have no great advantage of “the children of God,” as to the things of this life; for much of their satisfaction, such as it is, does hang, for the most part, on their hope; the happiest and richest of them still piece it out with some further expectation: something they look for beyond what they have, and the expectation of that pleases them more than all their present possessions. But this great disadvantage they have—all their hopes are but heaps of delusions and lies; and either they die, and obtain them not, or if they obtain them, yet they obtain them not, they are so far short of

what they fancied and imagined of them beforehand. But the hope of the children of God, as it is, without fail, sure, so it is inconceivably full and satisfying, far beyond what the largest apprehension of any man is able to reach. "Hope in God:" what is wanting there?—ABP. LEIGHTON.

Oh! what would adversity be without hope? This is the last lingering light of the human bosom, that continues to shine when every other has been extinguished. Quench it, and the gloom of affliction becomes the very blackness of darkness—cheerless and impenetrable. DR. WARDLAW.

Christ is my life, my joy, my hope,  
Nor can I sink with such a prop.

DR WATTS.

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PSALM XXXIX. 9.

I was dumb, I opened not my mouth; because thou didst it.

Such an awful apprehension David had of God, as transcendently superior to him, and not accountable for his proceedings. When any impatient thoughts arise, we should presently chain them up, for there is folly and

fury in them. What am I, that my sullen spirit should dispute against the orders of Heaven? that my passions should resist the will of the highest Lord? that my desires should depose him from his throne? For thus by implication and consequence they do, who are vexed at his providence. A holy soul will tremble at the thoughts of it. Methinks God speaks to the afflicted and disturbed soul, in the words of the psalm—"Be still, and know that I am God." The actual consideration of his supremacy will be powerful to lay the growing storm of the passions. Impatience ariseth from the ignorance of God and ourselves.

Christian resignation is very different from that stoical stubbornness, which is most easily practised by those unamiable characters, whose regard centres wholly in self: nor could we, in a proper manner, exercise submission to the will of God under trials, if we did not feel them. He, who knows our frame, is pleased to allow that afflictions for the present are not joyous but grievous. But to them that fear him, he is near at hand, to support their spirits, to moderate their grief, and, in the issue, to sanctify it; so that they shall come

out of the furnace refined, more humble and more spiritual. There is, however, a part assigned us: we are to pray for the help we need; and we are not wilfully to give way to the impression of overwhelming sorrows. We are to endeavour to turn our thoughts to such considerations as are suited to alleviate it: our deserts as sinners; the many mercies we are still indulged with; the still greater afflictions which many of our fellow-creatures endure; and, above all, the sufferings of Jesus, that Man of sorrows, who made himself intimately acquainted with grief for our sakes.”—  
J. NEWTON.

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## PSALM XXXIX. 10.

I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.

What is health? what is strength? what is beauty? How soon Thou causest it all to pass away. When thou dost contend, who will answer thee? When thou dost bind with a chain, who can rend it asunder? Behold, “thou breakest down, and it cannot be built up again; thou shuttest up a man, and there can be no opening.” How little reason have I to glory in a healthy constitution. How

vain to depend on strength. How unwise to presume on prosperity. With what shame, too, am I filled, when I consider how little I valued health while I possessed it; how the days have passed on unimproved. Now I call to remembrance the coldness of my heart, and the unfruitfulness of my life. Ah! how little impression have sermons, and mercies, and privileges made on my mind. Oh, my God! I am confounded before thee, and would be humbled in the dust. I abhor myself, while I admire and adore thee for thy sparing mercy, for thou mightest justly have cut me down as a cumberer of the ground. But it is of thy mercies that I am not consumed, because thy compassions fail not.—BUCK.

Diseases are thy servants, Lord,  
They come at thy command;  
I'll not attempt a murmuring word  
Against thy chastening hand.

Yet I may plead, with humble cries,  
Remove thy sharp rebukes;  
My strength consumes, my spirit dies,  
Through thy repeated strokes.

Crushed as a moth beneath thy hand,  
We moulder to the dust;

Our feeble powers can ne'er withstand,  
And all our beauty's lost.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM XXXIX. 11.

When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity,  
thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth:  
surely every man is vanity.

“When thou with rebukes dost correct man for sin, (that is, by sicknesses, death of relations, and other losses,) thou makest his beauty (that is, of his outward man,) to consume away like a moth.” Whereas the beauty of the soul grows fair by affliction, but that of the body is blasted. Age, sickness, losses, will make the beauty of the body to fade, but of the soul to shine. “Though our outward man” decay and “perish, our inward man is renewed day by day,” 2 Cor. iv. 16. But for worldly sorrow; that, too often, not only weakens the body, but also causes heart trouble. “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones,” Prov. xvii. 22.—BUNYAN.

When Thou for sin rebukest man,  
Forthwith he waxeth wo and wan;



Bitterness fills our bowels; all our hearts  
Pine and decay,  
And drop away,  
And carry with them th' other parts.

But thou wilt sin and grief destroy;  
That so the broken bones may joy,  
And tune together, in a well-set song,  
Full of his praises,  
Who dead men raises.  
Fractures well cur'd make us more strong.

HERBERT.

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PSALM XXXIX. 13.

O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

As a good man would not wish to pass into eternity beneath the load of unpardoned guilt; so neither would he desire to meet his Judge in a state of spiritual declension. His desire is, that his house may be set in order; and that, when his Lord cometh, he may be found watching for his approach. How welcome is death to him that can die daily; it is he only that can desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better.—DR. MORISON.

The dread and dislike of death, do by no

means prove that a person is not a child of God. Even a strong believer may be afraid to die. We are not, in general, fond of handling a serpent or a viper, even though its sting is drawn, and though we know it to be so.—  
MARTIN.

This mortal life decays apace,  
How soon the bubble's broke!  
Adam, and all his numerous race,  
Are vanity and smoke.

I'm but a sojourner below,  
As all my fathers were:  
May I be well prepared to go  
When I the summons hear.

But if my life be spared awhile,  
Before my last remove,  
'Thy praise shall be my business still,  
And I'll declare thy love.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM xli. 3.

The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness.

God has promised his people that he will strengthen them, and make them easy under

their bodily pains and sicknesses. He has not promised that they shall never be sick, nor that they shall not lie long languishing, nor that their sickness shall not be unto death; but he hath promised to enable them to bear their affliction with patience, and cheerfully to wait the issue: the soul shall, by his grace, be made to dwell at ease, when the body lies in pain.—M. HENRY.

If we cannot think of Christ through the power of disease, O what a happiness is it to be assured, that Christ thinks constantly and effectually of us. He maketh all our bed in our sickness; that is, he turns the whole frame of our condition in it for our best advantage.—SERLE.

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PSALM xli. 4.

I said, Lord, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.

When we are under the rod, we must thus recommend ourselves to the tender mercy of our God:—Lord, heal my soul. Pardoning mercy heals it; renewing grace heals it: and this spiritual healing we should be more earnest for, than for bodily health.—M. HENRY.

Stamp thine own image on my soul;  
 Lift from the dust mine head;  
 Lord, thou hast wounded—make me whole;  
 Hast slain—now raise the dead.

MONTGOMERY.

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PSALM xlv. 1.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

They who have received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour, in love and obedience to, and dependence on him, may make the power, wisdom, truth, and love of God their refuge and strength; and in every urgent danger and trouble they will find him a ready and present help.—THOMAS SCOTT.

“Come,” would Luther say to Melancthon, a wise man, but more timorous than himself, when prospects looked dark and distressing at the beginning of the reformation, “Come, let us sing the forty-sixth psalm, and let earth and hell do their worst.”—JAY.

God is the refuge of his saints,  
 When storms of dark distress invade;  
 Ere we can offer our complaints,  
 Behold him present with his aid.

DR. WATTS.

## PSALM xlv. 10.

Be still, and know that I am God.

HE is God: this we should consider, and not lift up a rebellious hand, or suffer a disloyal thought to rise in our minds against him. And, indeed, nothing would contribute more to reconcile us to the providence of God, in any of the evils that befall us, than just apprehensions of his authority. A child will take that correction from his father, and a servant from his master, which he would not bear from another. The reason is, they have a right to correct, which a stranger has not. And this is the case of Christians, as the apostle intimates, arguing from the relation between God and us: "We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" No earthly fathers or masters have that authority over us which God has. This we should consider, and endeavour to bring our minds under the impression and influence of his sovereignty; and, when he smites, kiss the rod, and adore the hand that holds it.—  
BENJAMIN BENNET.

God of my life, look gently down,  
Behold the pains I feel;  
But I am dumb before thy throne,  
Nor dare dispute thy will.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM l. 15.

Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.

Till the day of trouble comes, such a promise is like the city of refuge to an Israelite, who, not having slain a man, was in no danger of the avenger of blood. He had a privilege near him, of which he knew not the use and value, because he was not in the case for which it was provided. But some can say, I not only believe this promise upon the authority of the Speaker, but I can set my seal to it; I have been in trouble, I took this course for relief, and I have not been disappointed. The Lord verily heard and delivered me. Thus afflictions likewise give occasion of our knowing and noticing more of the Lord's wisdom, power, and goodness, in supporting and relieving, than we should otherwise have known.—NEWTON.

Art thou in bodily sickness? call upon God, beg of him to support thee under thy pain and languor, to give thee patience, submission, and resignation to his will. It is lawful, too, that thou shouldest ask for the removal of thy affliction in God's own good time and way, that thou mayest be restored to health and capacity for the duties and enjoyments of life. But, above all, ask for a sanctified use of the affliction; that thy bodily sickness may be made the means of health to thy soul; that thou mayest be awakened to a more deep and effectual sense of the importance of eternal things—of thy state as a lost, perishing, and undone sinner; and of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only, and the all-sufficient Saviour; that thy affliction may be made a means, under the Divine blessing, of working holiness in thee, so that thou mayest come out from the affliction as gold purified in the fire; or, if thy sickness should be unto death, that thou mayest be prepared for the event, and made ready and willing for another and better world.

It is also right that in a time of sickness we should call upon God in a way of pious resolution and self-dedication; but this must

always be done with the deepest sense of our own insufficiency and instability, and the most humble reliance upon Divine grace, which alone can enable us to perform our vows. Thus did David in his affliction, and thus the saints of God, in all ages, have found it their privilege and their comfort to do. "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow. Then called I upon the name of the Lord; O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul."—"Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living."—J. P. HEWLETT.

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## PSALM li. 4.

That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.

Now here is the way to come to a holy use of all crosses—to consider, in all, that it is the Lord which judgeth us. Whatsoever betide us, it is according to his dispensing: the beginning, the measure, the end of every visitation is by his ordering. Who will not be



afraid to repine when this is thought upon? Who will not set himself diligently to a making use of all, when this is duly pondered? What a confident expectation of a gracious issue will this produce, when one well considereth that he is in the hand of a wise and gracious God, who, knowing what we are, will inflict no more than he himself shall make us able to endure. It is the common manner to grow into indignation at second causes in sicknesses: we many times blame the air, the house, the company, the diet; we think not upon God, that ordereth all: so in losses, we cry out upon this, and rage against that; this it was owing to, and by that it was caused; we look not up, as we ought, to Him that sitteth at the stern, and guideth all particulars. Let us learn of David here to raise up our thoughts a degree higher, and, when any thing cometh athwart, let us pitch upon this—It is the Lord that judgeth us. Little know we, until we have found it in experience, what is the quiet fruit of righteousness which will follow hereupon.—JEROME.

How should the sons of Adam's race  
Be pure before their God?

If he contend in righteousness  
We fall beneath his rod.

To vindicate my words and thoughts  
I'll make no more pretence ;  
Not one of all my thousand faults  
Can bear a just defence.

Strong is his arm, his heart is wise ;  
What vain presumers dare  
Against their Maker's hand to raise,  
Or tempt the unequal war.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM LV. 22.

Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.

What a glorious promise to a tempted and afflicted soul! God will carry both thee and thy load. Then cast thyself and it upon him.  
—DR. A. CLARKE.

It is our part to let the Almighty exercise his own office, and guide his own helm. There is nothing left us but to see how we may be approved of him, and how we may roll the weight of our weak souls (in well doing) upon him who is God Omnipotent.—  
GURNALL.

But I, with all my cares,  
Will lean upon the Lord ;  
I'll cast my burdens on his arm,  
And trust upon his word.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM LX. 11.

Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man.

Then only we are qualified to receive help from God, when we are brought to own the insufficiency of all creatures to do that for us which we expect him to do.—M. HENRY.

Our sorrows and our tears we pour  
Into the bosom of our God ;  
He hears us in the mournful hour,  
And helps us bear the heavy load.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM LXVI. 10.

For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried.

Then we are likely to get good by our afflictions, when we look upon them under this notion; for then we may see God's grace

and love at the bottom of them. By afflictions we are proved, as silver in the fire: 1. That our graces, by being tried, may be made more evident, and so we may be approved, as silver when it is touched and marked sterling; and this will be to our praise at the appearing of Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. i. 7; and, perhaps, in this world: Job's integrity and constancy were manifested by his afflictions. 2. That our graces, by being exercised, may be made more strong and active, and so we may be improved, as silver when it is refined by the fire, and made more clear from its dross; and this will be to our unspeakable advantage, for thus we are made partakers of God's holiness.—M. HENRY.

I must expect a daily cross,  
Lord sanctify the pain;  
Bid every furnace purge my dross,  
And yield some patient gain.

BERRIDGE.

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PSALM lxxiii. 26.

My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.

Others have experienced, and we must ex-

pect, the failing both of flesh and heart. The body will fail, by sickness, age, and death, and that which touches the bone and the flesh, touches us in a tender part, that part of ourselves which we have been but too fond of. When the flesh fails, the heart is ready to fail too: the conduct, and courage, and comfort fails; but gracious souls, in their greatest distresses, rest upon God as their spiritual strength, and their eternal portion.—M. HENRY.

Jesus! in whom but thee above,  
Can I repose my trust, my love?  
And shall an earthly object be  
Loved in comparison with thee?

My flesh is hastening to decay,  
Soon shall the world have passed away;  
And what can mortal friends avail,  
When heart, and strength, and life shall fail?

But O! be thou, my Saviour, nigh,  
And I shall triumph while I die;  
My strength, my portion, is Divine,  
And Jesus is for ever mine!

CONDER.

## PSALM lxxvii. 7, 8.

Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more? Is his mercy clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore?

In time of affliction and wrathful days, we are ready to think mercy is drowned in the ocean of wrath: therefore, it is seasonable in time of wrath, to plead that God would remember mercy.—RALPH ERSKINE.

Affliction, simply considered, is not enough to make or evidence a man to be happy; so neither is it sufficient to conclude a man to be miserable. No man is therefore miserable, because afflicted. It may prove a teaching affliction, and then he is happy.—CASE.



## PSALM lxxviii. 34.

When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God.

How officious will men be in affliction to that God whom they neglect in their prosperity. They remembered him under the scourge, and forgot him under his smiles. They visit the throne of grace, knock loud at heaven's gates, and give God no rest for their

early and importunate devotions when under distress; but when their desires are answered, and the rod removed, they stand aloof from him, and rest upon their own foundation; as, “We are lords; we will come no more unto thee,” Jer. ii. 31. When we have need of him, he shall find us clients at his gate; and when we have served our turn, he hears no more of us: like Noah’s dove sent out of the ark, that returned to him when she found no rest on the earth, but came not back when she found a footing elsewhere. How often do men apply themselves to God, when they have some business for him to do for them; and then, too, they are loath to put it solely into his hand, to manage it for his own honour; but they presume to be his directors, that he may manage it for their glory. Self spurs men on to the throne of grace; they desire to be furnished with some mercy they want, or to have the clouds of some judgments which they fear, blown over: this is not affection to God, but to ourselves.—CHARNOCK.

You have now vacant days, and perhaps, too, sleepless nights, spent in silence on a bed of sickness or of pain. Use these tedious but precious hours in examining your own



heart; in searching and trying your ways, that you may learn the special design of Providence in this dispensation; that you may recollect what duties you have been most accustomed to neglect in the place and relation in which you are fixed, and what temptations have been most ready to prevail upon you, and, in some lamented instances, to draw you aside from Him, whose goodness, forbearance, and mercy, you had so often experienced.—  
DR. STONEHOUSE.

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PSALM LXXVIII. 38, 39.

But He, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

He, feeling for them as a father for his children, made an atonement for their iniquity; and, though they often grieved his Spirit, and rebelled against him, yet he seldom punished them; and, when he did chastise them, he took their feeble perishing state always into consideration, and knew how much they needed the whole of their state of probation,



and therefore he bore with them to the uttermost. How merciful is God!—DR. ADAM CLARKE.

Severe afflictions have been necessary to recover us from our backslidings; and though we are not mere hypocrites in returning to the Lord, yet we have soon forgotten the salutary lesson. If our hearts have, perhaps, been sincere, yet they have not been steadfast with him, so that it is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed with our fellow-sinners; and we have cause to review, with shame and gratitude, every stage of our journey through the wilderness.—THOMAS SCOTT.

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PSALM LXXXVI. 7.

In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee.

Prayer is the solace of trouble. There is some relief in tears, and therefore nature is provided with them. It eases and soothes the bursting heart, to pour our grief into the ear of a friend, who, having rejoiced when we rejoiced, will weep when we weep. But, oh! how good is it to draw near to God! How delightful is it, like Job, to pour out our tears

unto him; and resemble the child that sobs himself asleep in his mother's arms, and on his mother's breast.—JAY.

It is true, a good man is always a praying man; he considers prayer as the grand means of intercourse with God. But how differently he feels in the hour of affliction to what he does at other times. He has often reason to lament over the insensibility of his heart, and the cold manner in which his supplications are presented before the throne. But, when affliction comes, what life and energy does it put into his prayers; he does not then want words to express himself; it is not then a formal service; his whole heart is engaged; yea, he finds it his privilege that he can take his afflictions to God, and that, while he is surrounded by the tempest, he can implore the protection of Him who hath all things under his command. Ah, how many can look back to the place of affliction, and say: "There it was my soul poured out many prayers to the Lord; there I prayed indeed; there I knew what communion with God meant; there I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.—BUCK.

## PSALM lxxxviii. 7.

Thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves.

A righteous man considers his afflictions as coming from the hand of God; and thus we should all learn to receive them. They must necessarily come, and when they come they must be borne; but they can only be borne with submission, as we see God in them. A man in affliction is a pitiable sight; but a man in affliction, without God, is an awful one. Oh, how I pity that poor creature, laid upon the bed of languishing, full of pain, without food, without medicine, without one kind friend to smooth his pillow, to put into his hand a suitable remedy, to raise him up, or afford him the least mean of help: but I pity from my heart, a thousand times more, the miserable wretch that lies bound with the cords of affliction, and struggling with disease, without any sense of a Divine Providence, without acknowledging that it is the hand of God, and who never once cries to Him, who alone can heal, and can save. Christian, it is your privilege, under all the sorrows you are called to bear, to look up and say, “The Lord reigneth. Clouds and darkness are round

about him; but righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne.” It is true, you cannot develope the whole of the Divine plan, yet you can bear your testimony, and say, “It is good for me to be afflicted.” Yea, yours is the privilege to hope, yours to trust, yours to rejoice, yours to look forward with pleasing anticipation to the happy period when the clouds shall pass away, and the light of heaven shine without interruption for ever.—  
BUCK.

Floods of tribulation heighten,  
 Billows still around me roar;  
 Those who know not Christ, they frighten,  
 But my soul defies their power:  
 Sweet affliction—  
 Thus to bring my Saviour near.

PEARCE.

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 PSALM LXXXIX. 30—33.

If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

Observe what affliction is to God's people.

1. It is but a rod; not an axe, not a sword: it is for correction, not for destruction. This notes gentleness in the affliction, such a rod as yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness.

2. It is a rod in the hand of God. I will visit them. He is wise, and knows what he doth; gracious, and will do what is best.

3. It is the rod which they shall never feel the smart of, but when there is great need. "If they break my law, then I will visit their transgression with a rod," but not else. Then it is requisite that God's honour be vindicated, and that they be humbled and reduced. The continuance of Christ's kingdom is made certain, notwithstanding all. Nevertheless my kindness will I not totally and finally take from him. Notwithstanding their provocations, yet my covenant shall not be broken. Afflictions are not only consistent with covenant love, but, to the people of God, they flow from it. Though David's seed be chastened, it doth not follow that they are disinherited; they may be cast down, but they are not cast off.—M. HENRY.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,  
But trust him for his grace;

Behind a frowning Providence,  
He hides a smiling face.

COWPER.

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PSALM XC. 12.

So teach us to number our days, that we may apply  
our hearts unto wisdom.

Did we, indeed, know and consider how  
quickly we shall pass from hence, it were not  
possible for us to cleave so fast to the things  
of this life and, as foolish children, to wade  
in ditches, and fill our laps with mire and  
dirt; to prefer base earth and flesh to immor-  
tality and glory.—ABP. LEIGHTON.

Teach me the measure of my days,  
Thou Maker of my frame;  
I would survey life's narrow space,  
And learn how frail I am.

A span is all that we can boast,  
An inch or two of time;  
Man is but vanity and dust,  
In all his flower and prime.

What should I wish or wait for, then,  
From creatures, earth and dust?  
They make our expectations vain,  
And disappoint our trust.

Now I forbid my carnal hope,  
My fond desires recall;  
I give my mortal interest up,  
And make my God my all.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM xci. 5.

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day.

Here is great security promised to believers in the midst of this danger: "Thou shalt not be afraid;" that is, God by his grace will keep thee from disquieting, distrustful fear, that fear which hath torment, in the midst of the greatest dangers. Wisdom shall keep thee from being causelessly afraid, and faith shall keep thee from being inordinately afraid. Thou shalt not be afraid of the arrow, as knowing, that though it may hit thee, it cannot hurt thee; if it take away the natural life, yet it shall be so far from doing any prejudice to the spiritual life, that it shall be its perfection. A believer needs not fear, and therefore should not fear an arrow, because the point is off, the poison is out; "O death, where is thy sting?" And because it is under Divine direction, and

will hit where God appoints, and not otherwise. Every bullet has its commission. Whatever is done, our heavenly Father's will is done, and we have no reason to be afraid of that.—M. HENRY.

Though destruction walk around us,  
Though the arrow past us fly,  
Angel-guards from Thee surround us;  
We are safe, if Thou art nigh.

EDMESTON.

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PSALM XCI. 9, 10.

Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the Most High thy habitation, there shall no evil befall thee.

Though trouble and affliction befall thee, yet there shall be no real evil in it, for it shall come from the love of God, and shall be sanctified; it shall come, not for thy hurt, but for thy good; and though, for the present, it be not joyous, but grievous, yet in the end it shall yield so well, that thou thyself shalt own no evil befell thee. It is not an evil, an only evil, but there is a mixture of good in it, and a product of good by it.—M. HENRY.



Jesus, lover of my soul,  
Let me to thy bosom fly,  
While the billows near me roll,  
While the tempest still is high!

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,  
Till the storm of life is past;  
Safe into the haven guide,  
O receive my soul at last.

Other refuge have I none,  
Hangs my helpless soul on thee!  
Leave, O leave me not alone!  
Still support and comfort me.

All my trust on thee is staid;  
All my help from thee I bring:  
Cover my defenceless head,  
With the shadow of thy wing.

CHARLES WESLEY.

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PSALM xciv. 12.

Blessed is the man whom thou chastenest, O Lord,  
and teachest him out of thy law.

Look not here only upon the affliction, but  
see how it comes attended; if the Lord come  
along with it, to sanctify it to your amendment,

if he teach as well as chastise, if he instruct you as well as correct you, then it is a proof of your happiness.—DR. ROBERT HARRIS.

He who each bitter cup rejects,  
No living spring shall quaff;  
He whom thy rod in love corrects,  
Shall lean upon thy staff:  
Thrice happy, then, O Lord, is he,  
Who knows his chastening is from Thee.  
BERNARD BARTON.

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PSALM ciii. 2—4.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction.

Forget not his benefits, but carefully preserve and treasure them up in thy memory. It was usual for saints, under the old testament, to set up some visible monument to remind them of God's singular favours to them; they erected stones and built altars, to be memorials of the mercies they received, and put names on the places for this end. Let all this teach you to guard against this evil of forgetting the Lord's kind providence

in recovering you from sickness. You are guilty of this evil when you do not duly value the mercy, but let it pass as a turn of common providence. When you let the impression of the mercy wear soon off your hearts; when you make a bad use of it, or do not rightly improve it to God's glory, and your own soul's good; when you do not put on new resolutions, to walk more exactly, live more fruitfully, and serve God more holily and humbly; then are you guilty of forgetting his benefits.—WILLISON.

O bless the Lord, my soul;  
Let all within me join  
And aid my tongue to bless his name,  
Whose favours are divine.

O bless the Lord, my soul;  
Nor let his mercies lie  
Forgotten in unthankfulness,  
And without praises die.

'Tis he forgives thy sins,  
'Tis he relieves thy pain,  
'Tis he that heals thy sicknesses,  
And makes thee young again.

DR. WATTS.

## PSALM ciii. 5.

Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

Eagles are supposed to live to a great age; and it is said, that, at the expiration of a hundred years, they naturally cast their feathers, and are covered anew, as if they were restored to youth again. The renewal of our strength after wasting sickness, is very pleasant to us, and should be acknowledged with hearty thanksgiving; yet the renewal of our souls to holiness, and the renewal of our spiritual strength from day to day, are blessings of a nobler and more enduring nature.—SCOTT.

Bless, O my soul, the God of grace,  
His favours claim thy highest praise;  
Why should the wonders he hath wrought  
Be lost in silence and forgot?

'Tis he, my soul, that sent his Son  
To die for crimes which thou hast done;  
He owns the ransom, and forgives  
The hourly follies of our lives.

The vices of the mind he heals,  
And cures the pains that nature feels;  
Redeems the soul from hell, and saves  
Our wasting life from threatening graves.

Our youth decay'd, his power repairs;  
His mercy crowns our growing years;  
He satisfies our mouth with good,  
And feeds our souls with heavenly food.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM cvii. 17—21.

Fools, because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat, and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men.

Though all our diseases spring from sin, yet some are more immediately the effect of man's transgression. Infatuated multitudes entail upon themselves months and years of disease and pain, by moments of licentious indulgence. If, in answer to their cries of distress, the Lord bring them back from the gates of death, surely they should praise him for his goodness, and sacrifice to him the sacrifices of thanksgiving, with fervency equal to their great unworthiness of such favours,

and proportioned to the consequences of dying in such a manner.—SCOTT.

The Lord is just and true,  
And upright in his way;  
He loves, but will correct us too,  
Whene'er we run astray.

With caution we should tread;  
For as we sow we reap;  
And oft bring mischief on our head,  
By some unwary step.

Lord, plant a godly fear  
Before my roving eyes,  
Lest some hid snake, or wily snare,  
My heedless feet surprise.

Or, should I start aside,  
And meet a scourging God,  
Let not my heart grow stiff with pride,  
But weep, and kiss the rod.

BERRIDGE.

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PSALM cxii. 4.

Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.

They shall have comfort in affliction. It is here implied, that good men may be in

affliction—the promise doth not exempt them from that—they shall have their share in the common calamities of human life; but, when they sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to them, Mic. vii. 8. They shall be supported and comforted under their troubles; their spirit shall be lightsome, when their outward condition is clouded. In Egyptian darkness, the Israelites had light in their dwellings. They shall be, in due time, and perhaps when they least expect it, delivered out of their troubles; when the night is darkest, the day dawns; nay, at the evening time, when night was looked for, it shall be light.—M. HENRY.

The sunshine to the flower may give  
 The tints that charm the sight;  
 But scentless would that flowret live,  
 If skies were always bright.  
 Dark clouds and showers its scent bestow,  
 And purest joy is born of wo.

BARTON.

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PSALM CXVI. 3.

The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

The sorrows of death are great sorrows,

and the pains of hell great pains—terror of conscience arising from sense of guilt. Let us, therefore, give diligence to prepare for the former, that we may escape the latter.—M. HENRY.

My flesh declin'd, my spirits fell,  
And I drew near the dead;  
While inward pangs, and fears of hell,  
Perplexed my wakeful head.

“My God!” I cried, “thy servant save,  
Thou ever good and just;  
Thy power can rescue from the grave,  
Thy power is all my trust.”

The Lord beheld me sore distress,  
He bid my pains remove;  
Return, my soul, to God, thy rest,  
For thou hast known his love.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM CXVI. 5.

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.

He is righteous, and did me no wrong in afflicting me; he is gracious, and was very kind in supporting and delivering me. Let



us all speak of God as we have found; and have we ever found him otherwise than just and good? No, our God is merciful, merciful to us, and it is of his mercies that we are not consumed.—M. HENRY.

My soul, repeat His praise,  
Whose mercies are so great;  
Whose anger is so slow to rise,  
So ready to abate.

God will not always chide;  
And when his strokes are felt,  
His strokes are fewer than our crimes,  
And lighter than our guilt.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM CXVI. 8.

For thou hast delivered my soul from death.

It is God's great mercy to us that we are alive; and the mercy is the more sensible if we have been at death's door, and yet have been spared and raised up; just turned to destruction, and yet ordered to return. That a life so often forfeited, and so often exposed, should yet be lengthened out, is a miracle of mercy. The deliverance of the soul from spiritual and

eternal death, is specially to be acknowledged by all those who are now sanctified, and shall be shortly glorified.—M. HENRY.

Ah ! wisely yet revolve this solemn thought,—  
“Had racking pains prevail’d, and death ensued,  
Where had my soul been found?”

Life is the time when pardon must be sought ;  
Death, and the grave, repentance quite exclude ;  
There’s no device, nor work, nor wisdom under  
ground. JOSEPH WILLIAMS.

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PSALM CXVI. 9.

I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

The consideration of this, that we are in the land of the living, should engage and quicken us to do so. We are spared, and continued in the land of the living, by the power, and patience, and tender mercy of our God, and therefore must make conscience of our duty to him. The land of the living is a land of mercy, which we ought to be thankful for; it is a land of opportunity, which we should improve. Canaan is called the land of the living, Ezek. xxvi. 20; and they whose lot is cast in such a valley of vision, are in a special

manner concerned to set the Lord always before them. If God has delivered our soul from death, we must walk before him. A new life must be a new life indeed.—M. HENRY.

Lord, thou hast heard thy servant cry,  
 And rescued from the grave ;  
 Now shall he live : (and none can die,  
 If God resolve to save.)

Thy praise, more constant than before,  
 Shall fill his daily breath ;  
 Thy hand, that hath chastised him sore,  
 Defends him still from death.

DR. WATTS.

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PSALM CXIX. 50.

This is my comfort in my affliction, for thy word hath quickened me.

The word of God has much in it that speaks comfort in affliction, but those only may apply it to themselves who have experienced, in some measure, the quickening power of the word. If through grace it makes us holy, there is enough in it to make us easy, in all conditions, under all events.—M. HENRY.

Precious Bible! what a treasure  
Does the word of God afford!  
All I want for life or pleasure,  
Food and medicine, shield and sword:  
Let the world account me poor,  
Having this, I need no more.

Food to which the world's a stranger,  
Here my hungry soul enjoys:  
Of excess there is no danger,  
Though it fills, it never cloy:  
On a dying Christ I feed,  
He is meat and drink indeed.

NEWTON.

Oh Book! infinite sweetness! let my heart  
Suck every letter, and a honey gain,  
Precious for any grief, in any part;  
To clear the breast, to mollify all pain.

HERBERT.

The unfortunate and much admired Poet, Collins, a little while before his death, in a lucid interval of that madness to which "a wounded spirit" had driven him, was found by a visiter with the Bible in his hand. "You see," said the poor sufferer, "I have only one book left, but it is the best!" "Oh!" exclaims our pious poet, Montgomery, "had he

found that one, that best book earlier, and learned to derive from it those comforts which it was sent from heaven to convey to the afflicted, could not he have sung ‘the death of the righteous,’ in numbers as sweet, as tender, and sublime, as those he sung on the death of the brave?”

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PSALM CXIX. 67.

Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word.

What wise patient will not more prize the healthfulness, than loathe the bitterness of that potion which is prescribed him by an able and careful physician? And so, what dutiful child of God will not more value the benefit, than fear the sufferings of those afflictions which are laid upon him by so wise and indulgent a Father? Needs must this administer much comfort to the afflicted saints of God, rightly to consider, that God casts into the furnace of affliction, as says Augustine, not that the vessel may be destroyed, but renewed; made what Paul was, a chosen vessel, or as Paul speaks, a vessel of ho-

nour, meet for the Master's use. Seeing this, then, is one main end of afflictions, the overthrow of sin, and the renewing in grace, be careful, O thou afflicted soul! in this, even the reformation of life. Thus it was with good Jacob, when he was afflicted with the cruelty of his sons, and the fear of the Canaanites; he then remembers his vow, and fulfils it; he then orders his household, and reforms it; then the strange gods are put away, and, in zeal to God's worship, he goes to build him an altar at Bethel. Doubtless he loseth the benefit of afflictions that is not bettered by them; for that, like Jonathan's arrows, they are not intended to the godly to wound, but to warn; not to kill, but to admonish.—MOS-  
SOM.

Long unafflicted, undismayed,  
In pleasure's path secure I strayed;  
Thou madest me feel thy chastening rod,  
And straight I turned unto my God.

What, though it pierced my fainting heart,  
I blessed thine hand that caused the smart;  
It taught my tears awhile to flow,  
But saved me from eternal woe.

Oh! hadst thou left me unchastised,  
Thy precept I had still despised;  
And still the snare in secret laid,  
Had my unwary feet betrayed.

I love thee, therefore, O my God,  
And breathe towards thy dear abode;  
Where, in thy presence fully blest,  
Thy chosen saints for ever rest.

COWPER.

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PSALM CXIX. 71.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted.

Physic is sometimes as good as food; yea, and more necessary many times, however uneasy it may be. "You only have I known of all the families on the earth, therefore will I punish you for your iniquities." It is as good for a child of God to be punished, as it is for a young tree to be pruned, John xv. 2. Yea, the pressure of affliction may press out the fragrant smell of their graces.—RALPH ERSKINE.

I find afflictions good for me. I have ever found them so. They are happy means, in the hand of the Holy Spirit, to mortify my corruptions, to subdue my pride, my passion,

my inordinate love to the creature. They soften my hard heart, bring me on my knees, exercise and increase faith, love, humility, and self-denial. They make me poor in spirit, and nothing in my own eyes. Welcome the cross! welcome deep adversity! welcome stripping providence! With Mr. Mason,

“They make me sing, O happy rod,  
That brought me nearer to my God!”

J. WILLIAMS.

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PSALM CXIX. 71 (including last clause) and 72.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy statutes. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

It is far better to learn by suffering to delight in God's word, and to value it more than thousands of gold and silver, than by prosperity to grow callous and ripe for eternal destruction. But how dreadful is their case, who grow hardened in sin in the furnace of affliction! Let us then still beseech our God, who is good and doth good, to teach us his statutes, and to incline our hearts to the exercise of faith, obedience, and submission to his holy will.—SCOTT.



A poor woman, from the north of England, went with her family to seek employment in the parish of St. Mary-le-bone, London. The husband, through fatigue, was attacked with a bilious fever; the disorder soon assumed a very malignant, putrid character, of which he died. Two of the children caught the infection, and died also. The widow was reduced, with her surviving children, to the most deplorable poverty, and seemed on the point of starving. In this situation she was visited by a Christian, who observed an old Bible, with a large print, lying on her table. He said, "I perceive you can read, and have got the best of books by you." She replied, "Oh, sir, what should I have done without it? It is not my own. My eyes with illness, anxiety, and tears, are too weak for a small print: I borrowed this Bible of a neighbour. It has been food to my body as well as to my soul. I have often passed many hours without any nourishment, but I have read this blessed book, till I have forgotten my hunger." Some time after this the poor woman died, literally worn down and exhausted with want and anxiety; but the night before she expired, the consolations of the holy Scriptures shone in her coun-

tenance. She spoke of her dissolution with a smile of sacred triumph; enumerated her pious ancestors and acquaintance, with whom she trusted shortly to unite in joy and felicity; and seemed, as it were, to feel the saying brought to pass, which is written, "Death is swallowed up in victory."

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## PSALM CXIX. 75.

In faithfulness thou hast afflicted me.

God has promised he will withhold no good thing from his people. Now he sees and knows that afflictions are good for them, good for their souls; his daily rod is as good for their souls, as his daily bread is for their bodies. Therefore he brings afflictions on them, and so makes good his promise to them! Oh believe this, "and let not your heart be troubled." Certainly faith acted on God's attributes will support under the greatest trials, and most grievous losses.—BUNYAN.

To pretend a trust in God, as to our souls and invisible things, and not to resign our temporal affairs with patience and quietness to his disposal, is a vain pretence, and we may

take hence an eminent trial of our faith: too many deceive themselves with a presumption of faith, in the promises of God, as to things future, and things divine; but, if they are brought into any temporal trials, they seem utter strangers to the life of faith. It was not so with Abraham; his faith acted itself uniformly with respect to the providences, as well as the promises of God.—DR. OWÉN.

It becomes a saint to believe the faithfulness of God to him, according to his covenant, under all afflictions and chastisements. Grace will act like itself at last; and they that trust in the Lord, shall never be ashamed. Though God veil his grace, and give us mercies on the point of his sword, yet, when we pass through the fire and the water, He will be with us. But we need good eyes to see the love of God when we are compassed with fire and water: yet it is there that a gracious soul hath some discerning of this promise in the midst of them. You shall not perish, because I will be with you. How boldly may a saint enter into those fires, and walk through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil! God cannot hide his face, his love, from such a faith. A tried faith, that will not let God go, nor en-

tain an unbelieving thought of Him, is a precious faith. God will certainly turn back on such a soul, and manifest his love at last in a glorious manner.—THOMAS COLE.

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## PSALM CXIX. 83.

For I am become like a bottle in the smoke, yet do I not forget thy statutes.

Bottles made of skins would shrivel up, and become unsightly and useless, by hanging in the heat and smoke. Thus David seemed to himself to become useless and despicable, through the infirmities of age, and his manifold trials and sufferings.—SCOTT.

Whatever our outward condition is, we must not cool in our affection to the word of God, nor let that slip out of our minds; no care, no grief, must crowd that out. As some “drink, and forget the law,” Prov. xxxi. 5, so others weep, and forget the law; but we must in every condition, both prosperous and adverse, have the things of God in remembrance; and, if we be mindful of God’s statutes, we may pray and hope that he will be mindful of our sorrows, though for a time he seems to forget us.—M. HENRY.

## PSALM CXIX. 92.

Unless thy law had been my delights, I should then have perished in mine affliction.

Afflictions are very overwhelming sometimes, and would indeed quite sink us, if the word of God did not speak comfort to us in and under them. It is a sign of a spiritual frame, when, in the midst of troubles and afflictions, we can find present delight in the word of God; but when afflictions come, and the word administers no comfort, it is a sign we are in a dead, unbelieving frame, and no way affected with the report the gospel makes of future happiness.—THOMAS COLE.

The committee of a benevolent society at Deptford, formed for the purpose of visiting and relieving the sick and distressed, having received information that a poor aged woman had met with a bodily injury, which had reduced her to a state of the utmost wretchedness, sent their visiters to her. They went on a sharp winter's evening, and found her lying on a heap of rags, not deserving the name of a bed, without either sheet or blanket, and her afflicted body covered only by a tattered silk cloak, and a ragged bedquilt. The

window-panes were broken; she had no fire, nor any money to purchase fuel. When the visitors expressed their concern at finding her in such deep affliction, she replied, "My distress is indeed great, but far short of what I deserve: I thank God that it is no worse, and pray for resignation to his will, that I may suffer without murmuring." Notwithstanding the extreme wretchedness of her situation, she appeared serene, and even cheerful; and, on being requested, gave them a short account of her former life. She had been brought up with respectable prospects, and received a suitable education, as was evident from the general propriety and correctness of her language. Until her fortieth year, she had lived comfortably. After that, in consequence of an adverse change in her circumstances, she opened a little school, but was frequently unable to procure the money due to her; and was at length, from ill health and other causes, obliged to relinquish that employment. For a considerable time she had only nine-pence a week to support her; and, during the last three years, she had subsisted principally on what she had picked up in the streets, and at fishmongers' stalls. "Three weeks ago," said she, "I met

with the accident which now confines me; and though, during the time I have been thus confined, I have been destitute of most of the necessities of life, I can trust in my heavenly Father!" A Bible, which she had received through the instrumentality of the Deptford Bible Association, lay on her tattered bed. She laid her hand upon it, and said, "At six years of age I could read my Bible, but I have learned more from it during this affliction, than I did before in all my life. Oh, what a treasure is the word of God!" The same persons frequently visited her afterwards, and uniformly found her evincing the same resigned, contented, and thankful disposition, the same tranquil reliance on the word of God. Her Bible always appeared to furnish her chief support and consolation.

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PSALM CXXVI. 5.

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

1. A joyful harvest, by God's blessing, is the natural consequence of a dropping seed-time. The tears of godly sorrow water the ground, naturally hard and dry, and promote



the springing of the spiritual seed. "Tribulation," says the apostle, and the apostle had good reason to know—"Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." In dry weather, weeds are not so soon discovered, nor so easily rooted out, as they are after a shower; and in prosperity, corruptions lie more unobserved, and are with more difficulty subdued. "Fools make a mock of sin;" and even Christians themselves, at times, do not feel its evil and malignancy so deeply as they ought. So far, however, is certain—and we need not quote Scripture for the truth of it—that grace thrives best in a weeping heart, and, that they are in general the most lively and joyful Christians, who, as to outward things, have tears for their meat night and day. But if this should be disputed, and the great advantages of affliction should be denied, and the gloomy Christian should find little encouragement to hope for future comfort from present appearances, I would add—

2. God, who cannot lie, hath promised it. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." "To the upright there ariseth light in the darkness."



“Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” These, and a multitude of like promises, hath God given, to assure us, that how great soever the trials and distresses of his people may be, they shall, sooner or later, have a joyful issue. And hath God said it, and shall it not come to pass? Hath he promised, and will he not make it good? Can the designs of Omnipotence be defeated? Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than one jot or tittle of what he hath said pass unfulfilled. The Lord of the harvest hath engaged for it. He who “maketh the clouds his chariot, who walketh upon the wings of the wind,” and doth what he pleases in heaven and earth, so that “none ever hardened himself against him and prospered;”—He hath declared, that “they that sow in tears, shall reap in joy;” that he will “revive the spirit of the humble, and cheer the heart of the contrite ones;” and that “the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away” for ever.—LAVINGTON.

## PROVERBS, iii. 11, 12.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord ; neither be weary of his correction : For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.

The apostle explains it, “ Neither faint when thou art corrected of him,” Heb. xii. 5, 6 ; adding a most powerful argument against these extremes: “ For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth ;” and, therefore, despise not his fatherly corrections, slight them not, for they come from a loving Father, a wise Father, and should not be despised by his children, because they are the fruits of his love. Also, you must not be weary of them, nor faint under them, for the same reason, namely, because they shall not hurt you ; they flow from your Father’s love, who delighteth in you, and therefore ye ought not to faint under them.—BUNYAN.

Amidst his wrath compassion shines,  
His strokes are lighter than our sins ;  
And while his rod corrects his saints,  
His ear indulges their complaints.

So fathers their young sons chastise,  
With gentle hand and melting eyes;  
The children weep beneath the smart,  
And move the pity of their heart.

DR. WATTS.

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PROVERBS, xi. 31.

Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.

God's children smart under their sins here in the world, as well as others. The righteous is "recompensed in the earth," that is, punished for his sins. Compare with it 1 Pet. iv. 18, "And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?" God punisheth here that he may spare for ever. He giveth some remembrance of the evil, and corrects his people, not to complete their justification, or to make more satisfaction for God's justice than Christ hath made; but to promote their sanctification, that is, to make sin bitter to them, and to vindicate the glory of God, that he is not partial. For these reasons they are even brought to the dust for their own folly.—DR. MANTON.

Yes, the true born sons of heaven  
Feel the chastening hand of God;  
Though accepted and forgiven,  
Yet they need their Father's rod;  
Nor if they should bid him spare,  
Would he hearken to their prayer.

Full of pity, full of kindness,  
Yet he makes his children prove;  
Nothing of parental blindness  
Ever mixes with his love:  
When the rod must be applied,  
Truth and wisdom are his guide.

KELLY.

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PROVERBS, xiii. 1.

A wise son heareth his father's instruction: but a scorner heareth not rebuke.

“HEARETH” is not in the Hebrew, which reads, A wise son is the instruction or chastisement of his father. The Jews have a proverb—If you see a wise child, be sure that the father hath chastised him. God deals in this manner with his children, and there is need of it; for though the regenerate are freed from the slavery of sin, yet, while they are clothed with flesh, the flesh will lust

against the spirit; and God not only chastises us for our infirmities, but to prevent them. And since the love which he bears us, and the salvation which he procures by his chastisements, doth infinitely surpass the affections of the best and tenderest fathers, and the best fruit we can draw from their discipline; we may well confess, that no father in the world can be said to deal as a father with his children, so as God doth with the believer. He offers himself to do a father's office; he is the world's Sovereign, but a believer's Father; as he is the Governor of the world, he treats men righteously in his judgments; as he is the Father of believers, he treats them graciously in his afflictions.—CHARNOCK.

Father, sanctify the rod,  
Dip it in the Saviour's blood;  
Let the stripes my folly heal,  
And a Father's love reveal.

BERRIDGE.

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PROVERBS, xvii. 17.

A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

Whenever the distressed sinner applies for

salvation to the once crucified, but now glorious Redeemer, he communicates to him mercy, and grace, and peace; and he is the constant and condescending Friend and Brother of every believer, in the lowest scenes of adversity, in the hottest fire of persecution, in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.—T. SCOTT.

Poor, weak, and worthless, tho' I am,  
I have a rich Almighty Friend;  
Jesus, the Saviour, is his name,  
He freely loves, and without end.

He ransomed me from hell with blood;  
And, by his power, my foes controlled;  
He found me wandering far from God,  
And brought me to his chosen fold.

He cheers my heart, my want supplies,  
And says that I shall shortly be  
Enthroned with him above the skies:  
Oh! what a friend is Christ to me!

NEWTON.

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PROVERBS, XVIII. 10.

The name of the Lord is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it and is safe.

They who know not this refuge are mise-

rable; and when any danger arises, they run hither and thither, "they fly and flutter they know not whither." The life of man upon earth is a warfare; and it is much better, in the midst of enemies and dangers, to be acquainted with one fortress than with many inns. He that knows how to pray may be pressed, but cannot be overwhelmed.—ABP. LEIGHTON.

The God of Abram praise,  
At whose supreme command  
From earth I'd rise, and seek the joys  
At thy right hand :

I'd all on earth forsake,  
Its wisdom, fame, and power ;  
And him my only portion make,  
My shield and tower.

OLIVER.

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PROVERBS, XXIV. 10.

If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.

When afflictions depress a man's spirits, and unfit him for duty, and lead him to neglect or decline it, it is manifest that his faith and grace are weak, and, consequently, he is

wanting in vigour and courage; or, that he is a feeble man, not fit for difficult and trying services of any kind.—T. SCOTT.

When the Lord afflicts, it is his design that we should grieve; but in this, as in all other things, there is a certain moderation which becomes a Christian, and which only grace can teach; and grace teaches us, not by books or by hearsay, but by experimental lessons: all beyond this should be avoided, and guarded against as sinful and hurtful. Grief, when indulged and excessive, preys upon the spirits, injures health, indisposes for duty, and causes us to shed tears, which deserve more tears.—NEWTON.

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ECCLES. vii. 13.

Consider the work of God: for who can make that straight which he hath made crooked?

As to the crook in thy lot, God hath made it; and it must continue as long as he will have it so. Shouldst thou ply thine utmost force to make it straight, thine attempt will be vain: it will not alter, notwithstanding all which thou canst do: only He who made it can mend it, or make it straight. This con-



sideration, this view of the matter, is a proper means, at once to silence and to satisfy men, and so to bring them to a dutiful submission to their Maker and Governor, under the crook in their lot.—BOSTON.

Since, therefore, we cannot mend God's work, we ought to make the best of it.—M. HENRY.

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## ECCLES. vii. 14.

In the day of adversity consider.

Times of affliction are proper times for consideration; then God calls us to consider, Hag. i. 5, then, if ever, we are disposed to it, and no good will be gotten by the affliction without it. We cannot answer God's end in afflicting us, unless we consider why and wherefore he contends with us. And consideration is necessary also to our comfort and support under our afflictions.—M. HENRY.

In all cases of suffering, the people of God should consider—1. God wills them and sends them: now the will of God is perfectly righteous, and what he does is so well done, that it could not be better done. 2. There is need of them, or we should not have them. 3.

Their number, measure, and continuance God determines; and, comparatively speaking, they are but for a moment. 4. The Lord will be sure to support us under them. 5. They are not too many, too heavy, nor too long, as Satan would have them; nor too few, too short, nor too light, as our corrupt natures would have them. 6. Their end is a weight of glory, and the crown that attends them is everlasting.—DODD.

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## ECCLES. ix. 1.

No man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before him.

God doth not always love those whom his providence preserves in health and ease. Such a conceit proceeds from an ignorance of another life, and too great a valuation of the things of this world. Temporal goods, credit in the world, outward conveniences, and an uninterrupted health, are effects of God's patience and common goodness, but not of his affection and choicest love. They are the marks of his affection when, by his grace, they are made means to conduct us to a better inheritance; but how often are they per-

nicious to us, by reason of our corruption and ill usage of them: how often doth the health of the body destroy that of the soul, and the prosperity of the flesh ruin that of the spirit! How often do riches and honours link our hearts to the earth, and expel all thoughts of a heavenly paradise! How often doth a portion in this world make many slack their endeavours for a portion in heaven! How often do they hinder our sanctification, which is the only means to a happy vision of God!—  
CHARNOCK.

Not to my wish, but to my wants,  
Do thou thy gifts apply;  
Unasked what good thou knowest grant  
What ill, though asked, deny.

MERRICK.

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ISAIAH, i. 5.

Why should ye be smitten any more? Ye will revolt more and more.

Where God refuses to correct, there God resolves to destroy; there is no man so near the axe, so near the flames, so near hell, as he whom God will not so much as spend a rod upon. God is most angry when he shows no

anger. Jerome, writing to a sick friend, hath this expression—"I account it a part of unhappiness not to know adversity; I judge you to be miserable, because you have not been miserable." "Nothing," saith another, "seems more unhappy to me than he to whom no adversity hath happened." God afflicts thee, O Christian, in love; and therefore Luther cries out, "Strike, Lord; strike, Lord; and spare not." Who can seriously muse upon this and not be silent under the most smarting rod?—BROOKS.

Lord, I would not repine  
At strokes in mercy sent;  
If the chastisement comes in love,  
My soul shall be content.

BEDDOME.

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ISAIAH, XII. 1.

And in that day thou shalt say, O Lord, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortest me.

When we turn from God, his anger is turned against us; and when we turn to God, his anger is turned away from us. When the Lord is angry, what can comfort us, but the

turning away of his anger? and by the very act of turning away his anger he comforts us, though all the world be angry with us.—

CARYL.

I will extol thee, Lord, on high ;  
At thy command diseases fly ;  
Who but a God can speak and save  
From the dark borders of the grave ?

Sing to the Lord, ye saints of his,  
And tell how large his goodness is ;  
Let all your powers rejoice and bless  
While you record his holiness.

His anger but a moment stays ;  
His love is life and length of days ;  
Though grief and tears the night employ,  
The morning star restores the joy.

DR. WATTS.

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ISAIAH, XXVI. 16.

Lord, in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them.

Our prayers did but drop out before, now they are poured out; and one work of heart does so follow another, that there is no intermission, it is all but one prayer they have

poured out—not prayers, but a prayer. This prayer now is not an empty thing, but full of efficacy, containing much in a few words. The graces of God's Spirit are the most lovely things in the world in God's eyes, and, therefore, God delights much to see the exercise of them. When spices are beaten, then they send forth their fragrant smell; so when God's servants are in affliction, then their graces send forth their sweetness in the activeness of them. When the box is broken, and the precious ointment is poured forth, then it sends forth its delightful savour; so when the heart is broken with affliction, and the grace is poured forth, then they give a smell sweet to God and men.—BURROUGHS.

Arise, my soul, from deep distress,  
And banish every fear;  
He calls thee to his throne of grace,  
To spread thy sorrows there.

DR. WATTS.

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ISAIAH, XXXIII. 24.

And the inhabitants shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.

When sin is pardoned, outward afflictions

are not worth complaining of. The inhabitant shall not say "I am sick;" a disease then becomes a medicine, when pardon hath taken away the curse and punishment of it. God hath two ends, with respect of himself, for which he brings punishments upon us: the one is the manifestation of his holiness; the other is for the satisfaction of his justice. If the latter, then thy afflictions are properly punishments, and they flow from the curse of the law; but if the manifestation of his holiness be all he intends by them, then are they only fatherly corrections, proceeding from love and mercy.—BP. HOPKINS.

Thou only centre of my rest,  
Look down with pitying eye,  
While with protracted pain opprest,  
I breathe the plaintive sigh.

Thy gracious presence, O my God,  
My every wish contains;  
With this beneath affliction's load,  
My heart no more complains.

STEELE.

## ISAIAH, XXXVIII. 9.

The writing of Hezekiah king of Judah, when he had been sick, and was recovered of his sickness.

There are writings which it is proper for us to draw up after we have been sick, and are recovered. It is good to write a memorial of the affliction, and of the frame of our hearts under it: to keep a record of the thoughts we had of things when we were sick, the affections that were then working in us: to write a memorial of the mercies of a sick-bed, and of our release from it, that they may never be forgotten: to write a thanksgiving to God, write a sure covenant with him, and seal it; give it under our hands, that we never return again to folly. It is an excellent writing which Hezekiah left upon his recovery; and yet we find, 2 Chron. xxxii. 25, that “he rendered not again according to the benefit done unto him.” The impressions, one would have thought, should never have worn off; and yet, it seems, they did. Thanksgiving is good, but thanks-living is better.—M. HENRY.

And live I yet by power Divine!

And have I still my course to run!



Again brought back, in its decline,  
The shadow of my parting sun!

Jesus to my deliverance flew,  
When sunk in mortal pangs I lay;  
Pale death, his ancient conqueror knew,  
And trembled, and ungrasped his prey.

God of my life, what just return  
Can sinful dust and ashes give?  
I only live my sin to mourn;  
To love my God I only live!

Be all my added life employed  
Thy image in my soul to see:  
Fill with thyself the mighty void;  
Enlarge my heart to compass thee.

CHARLES WESLEY.

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ISAIAH, XXXVIII. 12.

Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off like a weaver my life: he will cut me off with pining sickness: from day even to night wilt thou make an end of me.

When we are sick we are very apt to be calculating our time; and, after all, we are still at uncertainty. It should be more our care how we shall get safe to another world,

than how long we are likely to live in this world.—M. HENRY.

The man whose pious heart is fixed  
On his all-gracious God,  
From ev'ry frown may draw a joy,  
And kiss the chastening rod.

Nor him shall death itself alarm;  
On heaven the soul relies;  
With joy he views his maker's love,  
And with composure dies.

HEGINBOTHAM.

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ISAIAH, XXXVIII. 14.

O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.

Such is the language of every afflicted saint. Though strength be gone, and speech falters, though pain corrodes, and rest is departed, he desires to lift up his heart to God. "I own," says he, "that I deserve thy chastisement, but I implore thy mercy. Thou canst wound, and thou alone canst heal; thou bringest low, and thou liftest up. Forgive all the sins I have committed. Sanctify the means made use of for the restoration of my health. Raise me up, and make the remembrance of the

affliction a blessing. Let it be seen in my family, in the church, in society at large, that I have profited by this indisposition. But should it be unto death! O enter not into judgment with me; blot out my transgressions, and give me an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—BUCK.

Patience doth not stifle all modest complaints and moderate sorrow. A patient Christian may be well allowed this vent for his grief to work out at. Grace never destroys, but only regulates and corrects nature. It will permit thee to complain of what thou sufferest, so long as it keeps thee from complaining of that God, from whom thou sufferest. Thou mayest lawfully, without any wrong done to patience, express thy grief in all the outward and natural signs of it, only beware, lest this agitation make it exceed its due bounds and measures.—BISHOP HOPKINS.

O Lord, leave me not, poor and helpless sinner that I am, in my most healthful state; leave me not especially, I beseech thee, in the low, the languid, the distressing circumstances of infirmity and disease! Jesus, Master, thou art said to have borne our sicknesses, because

thou bearest the sins which occasioned them; take, take away from my conscience the guilt which brought disease, and then the worst part of its misery shall likewise be done away. And when, through my feebleness or disorder, I cannot act faith upon thy love, O catch my drooping spirit, carry me as one of thine own lambs in thy bosom, enfold me in thy gracious arms, and let my soul wholly commit itself, and give up its all, in quiet resignation to thee! If thou raise me from my sickness, grant that it may be for the setting forth of thy glory among men: if thou take me by sickness from this world, O thou Hope and Life of my soul, receive me to thyself for my everlasting happiness, and present me as another monument of sovereign grace before the great assembly of saints and angels in thy kingdom of heaven!—SERLE.

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ISAIAH, XXXVIII. 16.

Thou wilt recover me.

And God did so. This is not always the case. Sickness to some, yea, to many, is the messenger, the forerunner, the beginning of

death. And Hezekiah's sickness seems to have been in itself mortal, and would have issued in his speedy dissolution, but for the Divine interposition: he "was sick nigh unto death;" and the Lord said unto him, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live." But he was the subject of recovering mercy.

It was in answer to prayer. "Then Hezekiah turned his face toward the wall, and prayed unto the Lord, and said, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore." One of the designs of affliction is to bring us to God; and by prayer we obtain support under it, and sanctification by it, and deliverance from it. "Call upon me, in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." And did any ever seek him in vain? Did Hezekiah? So far from it, and to show how quickly prayer reaches God, and brings down the blessing, before Isaiah could get through the palace-yard, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "Go, and say to Hezekiah, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears." Thus he

not only hears and answers prayer, but fulfils the word, "Before they call I will answer, and while they speak, I will hear."

The second circumstance was the definite prolongation of his life. "Behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years." This was a considerable reprieve; yet it was nothing more. For so long a time he was raised up, but he was left mortal. The sentence, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," was only suspended. Have any of you been recovered from the bed of sickness? Remember you are dying creatures still, and you have no assurance of your life. You know not what a day, or an hour, may bring forth. The addition of fifteen years would not make Hezekiah an old man, and they would soon pass away like a dream. He is the only person who was previously informed how long he had to live. Doubtless he was concerned to improve the information, and would often say, "Well, there is another of the fifteen years gone, and the remainder is rapidly going. So teach me to number my days, that I may apply my heart unto wisdom." Yet it was awful for him to know the term of life. None of us would know it if it were in our

power. It is better for our comfort to be ignorant, and it is better for our improvement. As the shade upon the dial is useful, as well as the sunshine, so our ignorance may be rendered profitable. "Watch, for ye know not at what hour the Lord doth come."—JAY.

Long as I live beneath,  
To thee O let me live;  
To thee, my every breath,  
In thanks and blessings give;  
Me to thine image now restore,  
And I shall praise thee evermore.

CHARLES WESLEY.

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ISAIAH, XXXVIII. 19.

The living, the living, he shall praise thee as I do this day.

They may do it, they have an opportunity of praising God, and that is the main thing that makes life valuable and desirable to a good man. Hezekiah was therefore glad to live, not that he might continue to enjoy his royal dignity, and the honour and pleasure of his late successes, but that he might continue to praise God: they live in vain if they do

not. They that have been dying, and yet are living, whose life is life from the dead, are, in a special manner, obliged to praise God, as being most sensibly affected with his goodness. Hezekiah, for his part, being recovered from this sickness, will make it his business to praise God. "I do it this day," let others do it in like manner. They that give good exhortations should set good examples, and do themselves what they expect from others.  
M. HENRY.

O, bless the Lord, my soul!  
His grace to thee proclaim:  
And all that is within me join  
To bless his holy name.

O, bless the Lord, my soul!  
His mercies bear in mind;  
Forget not all his benefits,  
The Lord to thee is kind.

He will not always chide;  
He will with patience wait:  
His wrath is ever slow to rise,  
And ready to abate.

He pardons all thy sins,  
Prolongs thy feeble breath;



He healeth thine infirmities,  
And ransoms thee from death.

CHRISTIAN PSALMIST.

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ISAIAH, XXXVIII. 22.

Hezekiah also had said, What is the sign that I shall go up to the house of the Lord?

There to honour God, to keep up his acquaintance and communion with him, and to encourage others to serve him. It is taken for granted, that if God should restore him to health, he would presently go up to the temple with his thank-offerings; there Christ found the impotent man whom he had healed, John, v. 14. The exercises of religion are so much the business and delight of a good man, that to be restrained from them is the greatest grievance of his afflictions, and to be restored to them is the greatest comfort of his deliverances. Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee.—M. HENRY.

My God has saved my soul from death,  
And dried my falling tears;  
Now to his praise I'll spend my breath,  
And my remaining years.

DR. WATTS.

## ISAIAH, xliii. 2.

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

It can never be ill with that man with whom God is. It is infinitely more to say, "I will be with thee," than to say, "Peace is with thee, health is with thee, credit is with thee, honour is with thee." To say, "God is with thee," is all these, and infinitely more. For in these you have but a particular good, in God you have *all* good. When God says, "I will be with you," you may make what you will out of it; sit down and imagine with yourselves whatsoever good you can desire, and it is all comprehended in this one word, "I will be with thee." Now God, who is with the righteous at all times, is most with them in worst times; then he says in a special sense, "I will be with thee."—CARYL.

While in affliction's furnace,  
And passing through the fire,  
Thy love we praise, which tries our ways,  
And ever brings us nigher.

We clap our hands exulting  
In thine Almighty favour;  
The love Divine, which made us thine,  
Shall keep us thine for ever.

Thou dost conduct thy people  
Through torrents of temptation;  
Nor will we fear, whilst thou art near,  
The fire of tribulation.



## ISAIAH, xlviii. 10.

I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction.

That is, made thee a choice one, by the good which affliction has done thee, and then designed thee for great things. Many have been brought home to God as chosen vessels, and a good work of grace been begun in them, in the furnace of affliction. Affliction is no bar to God's choice, but subservient to his purpose.—M. HENRY.

My God, permit a creeping worm to say,  
Thy Spirit knows I love thee. Worthless wretch,  
To dare to love a God! But grace requires,  
And grace accepts. Thou seest my labouring soul,  
Weak as my zeal is, yet my zeal is true;

It bears the trying furnace. Love Divine  
Constrains me; I am thine. Incarnate Love  
Has seized, and holds me in almighty arms.  
Here's my salvation, my eternal hope,  
Amidst the wreck of worlds, and dying nature,  
I am the Lord's, and he for ever mine!

DR. WATTS.

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ISAIAH, lvii. 16.

For I will not contend for ever, neither will I be always wroth; for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made.

Consider that your affliction, however heavy it be, will soon have an end. The goldsmith will not let his gold lie longer in the furnace than it is purified. The wicked have a sea of wrath to drink: but, O drooping believer, take comfort, you have but a cup of affliction, which will soon be exhausted. The time is near when all thy trials shall have an end: in heaven there is no cross, no complaint, no tears, nor sorrows for ever.—WILLISON.

What are a few days of sorrow? What do these afflictions tend to, and effect? Do they not work out an exceeding weight of glory? Are you not by them made partakers of His

holiness? Is not this all the fruit to take away your sins? What! and be impatient at this! fret and repine, because God is this way perfecting your happiness! See how you are shamed by other Christians, perhaps such as never made a profession as you have done; yet can not only bear the afflictive hand of God, but are actually blessing, and praising, and admiring God under their troubles!

Look yonder, to a company of wicked, graceless wretches, who murmur, repine, and mix sin with their affliction; will you be like them?—FLAVEL.

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ISAIAH, lxiii. 9.

In all their affliction he was afflicted.

Not that the Eternal Mind is capable of grieving, or God's infinite blessedness of suffering the least damage or diminution. God cannot be afflicted; but thus he is pleased to show forth the love and concern he has for his people in their affliction. This is a matter of great comfort to God's people in their affliction, that God is so far from afflicting willingly, that if they humble themselves under

his hand, he is afflicted in their affliction, as the tender parents are in the severe operations which the case of a sick child calls for. There is another reading of these words in the original: "In all their affliction there was no affliction;" though they were in great affliction, yet the property of it was altered, by the grace of God sanctifying it to them for their good, the rigour of it was so mitigated, and it was so allayed and balanced with mercies, they were so wonderfully supported and comforted under it, and it proved so short, and ended so well, that it was, in effect, no affliction. The troubles of the saints are not that to them which they are to others; they are not afflictions, but medicines; they are enabled to call them "light," and but "for a moment," and with an eye to heaven as all in all, to make nothing of them.—M. HENRY.

Christ's exalted state in glory does not make him neglectful of poor sinners, nor scornful to them. No, he has the same heart in heaven that he had on earth; he went through all the temptations, dejections, sorrows, and desertions; he drank the bitterness of the cup, and left the sweet. The condemnation is out; he drank up all the Father's wrath

at one draught, and nothing but salvation is left for thee!—DR. CRISP.

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## JEREMIAH, v. 3.

O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.

We have whole quarries of such obdurate wretches amongst us; this impenitent disregard of God's hand is a dreadful presage of future and more heavy judgments. Who ever hardened himself against the Lord and prospered? Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he? The most refractory he can compel to acknowledge, with bitter lamentations, his wickedness and weakness, how unable he is to contend with his Judge. But, supposing a respite from punishment here, there is a hell prepared for stubborn sinners, where is weeping and wailing for ever. Whom the rods do not awaken, the scorpions shall.—DR. BATES.

God will have us to feel his hand, to inquire into the meaning of the rod, and search for

those sins that have provoked him to smite us.—WILLISON.

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## JEREMIAH, ix. 7.

Therefore thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, I will melt them and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people?

What other course can I take but this, according to the nature of man! The goldsmith hath no other way to separate the dross from the metal, but by melting it down; and, when the impurities of God's people necessitate him to this proceeding, he sits as a refiner, he watches for the purifying of the silver, not for his own profit, as the goldsmith, but out of a care of them, and good will to them, as himself speaks, "I have refined thee, but not with silver;" or, as some read it, "not for silver."—CHARNOCK.

When you see a refiner cast his gold into the furnace, do you think he is angry with the gold, and means to cast it away? No. He sits as a refiner. - He stands warily over the fire, and over the gold, and looks to it, that not one grain be lost. And when the



dross is severed, he will out with it presently; it shall be no longer there.—DR. CRISP.

Takes God delight in human weakness, then?

What glory reaps he from afflicted men?

The Spirit gone, can flesh and blood endure?

God burns his gold, to make his gold more pure.

QUARLES.

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JEREMIAH, x. 24.

O Lord, correct me, but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest thou bring me to nothing.

We cannot pray in faith that we may never be corrected, while we are conscious to ourselves that we need it, and deserve it, and know that as many as God loves he chastens. The great thing we should dread in affliction, is the wrath of God. Say not, "Lord, do not correct me," but, "Lord, do not correct me in anger," for that will infuse wormwood and gall into the affliction and misery; that will bring us to nothing: we may bear the smart of his rod, but we cannot bear the weight of his wrath.—M. HENRY.

Our heavenly Father must correct  
A well-beloved child;

Or sure he would his will reject,  
And wanton grow, and wild.

O Father, make thy love appear,  
And every doubt remove,  
By whispering in the sick child's ear,  
"I smite because I love."

BERRIDGE.

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JEREMIAH, XII. 1.

Righteous art thou, O Lord, when I plead with thee;  
yet let me talk with thee of thy judgments.

We are to own God's justice in all his dispensations, and in the evils he inflicts. We must not look upon his sovereignty as the exercise of mere power; but consider it, as it always is, in connexion with the greatest justice and equity. He never punishes but for sin, and never further than our sins deserve and need. This we must receive as a principle, and lay as a foundation of all our intercourse with God in his providence.—BENJAMIN BENNET.

Glory to the righteous God,  
Righteous, yet benign to me!  
Still in his paternal rod  
His paternal love I see.

Let him tenderly chastise,  
Let him graciously reprove,  
Father, all within me cries,  
All thy ways are truth and love.

CHARLES WESLEY.

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JEREMIAH, XXII. 21.

I spake unto thee in thy prosperity; but thou saidst, I will not hear.

The noise and bustle of successful business, or intoxicating pleasure, drown the voice of God and conscience. At such a time we live, as it were, constantly abroad, and are strangers to what passes at home. But when trouble or sickness comes, and shuts us up in our own houses, and we are obliged to spend many hours alone, we cannot help reflecting: and then conscience, which had winked at our faults before, or, at least, had not reproved us for them as it ought, now puts us in mind of this and the other, and a multitude of sins, that we had committed in those days of thoughtless dissipation, and sets them home with such a reproaching vehemence as fills us with shame and anguish. Joseph's brethren, when they were accused as spies, and threatened to be

severely dealt with, "said one to another, We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear: therefore is this distress come upon us," Gen. xlii. 21; though we do not find that they ever had one relenting thought before. So the widow mentioned in 1 Kings, xvii. 18, when her son was seized with a sudden and fatal sickness, said to Elijah, "What have I to do with thee, O thou man of God? Art thou come unto me to call my sin to remembrance, and to slay my son?" Under a smarting rod, guilt that had lain, for weeks, perhaps for years, without giving the least disturbance, now starts up, and strikes home. Job, when his body was full of sores, was made to "possess the iniquities of his youth;" and David, in the midst of great outward affliction, makes this the heaviest part of his complaint; "For innumerable evils have compassed me about; mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me," Psal. xl. 12. But no sooner had he confessed his transgression to the Lord, and the Lord had forgiven the iniquity of his

sin, than presently he seemed to be in another world; he was all peace and praise: "Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." Bodily pain is easily borne, when all is peace within.—  
LAVINGTON.

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## LAMENTATIONS, III. 1.

I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath.

God is sometimes angry with his own people; yet it is to be complained of, not as a sword to cut off, but only as a rod to correct; it is to them "the rod of his wrath," a chastening, which, though grievous for the present, will, in the issue, be advantageous. By this rod, we must expect to see affliction; and, if we be made to see more than ordinary affliction by that rod, we must not quarrel; for we are sure the anger is just, and the affliction mild and mixed with mercy.—M. HENRY.

While rods are in the Father's hand,  
A Father's heart reveal,  
And teach the child to understand  
Thy loving-kindness well.

Support his heart, and hold his head,  
And sanctify the rod;  
Purge out the dross which health has bred,  
And draw his heart to God.

BERRIDGE.

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LAMENTATIONS, iii. 19, 20.

Remembering mine affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall. My soul hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled in me.

It becomes us to have humbled hearts under humbling providences, and to renew our penitent humiliation for sin, upon every remembrance of our afflictions and miseries. Thus we may get good by former corrections, and prevent further.—M. HENRY.

I charge my thoughts be humble still,  
And all my carriage mild,  
Content, my Father, with thy will,  
And quiet as a child.

The patient soul, the lowly mind,  
Shall have a large reward:  
Let saints in sorrow lie resigned,  
And trust a faithful Lord.

DR. WATTS.

## LAMENTATIONS, iii. 22.

It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

There is mercy in this, that it is no worse. Am I afflicted? it might have been hell, as well as this. There is mercy in God's supports under it. Others have sunk, and I might have been left to sink and perish under my burdens. There is mercy in deliverance out of it. This might have been everlasting darkness, that should never have had a morning. O the tenderness of Christ over his afflicted!—  
FLAVEL.

Two things should comfort suffering Christians, namely, all they suffer is not hell; yet it is all the hell they shall ever suffer.—MASON.

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 LAMENTATIONS, iii. 39.

Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?

Why should we murmur and complain, since we justly suffer what we suffer, and it is the Lord's condescension that he will make some good use of these sufferings to our eternal happiness, that we may be capable of ever-

lasting consolation. His justice should stop murmurings. "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" If he complain, he can complain of none but himself, that evil choice he hath made for his own soul, which it may be he would never have thought of but upon this occasion. His punishment here carrieth no proportion with his offence: it is punishment in the singular number, sins in the plural; one punishment for many acts of sin: and a living man on this side hell—what is this to everlasting torments? Life cannot be without many blessings to accompany it; while living we may see an end of this misery, or have time to escape those eternal torments which are far worse. The form of the words sheweth why we should thus expostulate with ourselves, "Wherefore doth a living man complain?" Why do we complain? God hath not cut us off from the land of the living, nor cast us into hell; it is the punishment of sin, and it is far less than we have deserved.—  
DR. MANTON.

Our lusts are cords; fiery trials are sent to burn and consume them.—RUTHERFORD.

All afflictions that ever a saint is exercised with, are neither too numerous nor too sharp:



a great deal of rust requires a rough file.—  
BROWN.

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## DANIEL, iv. 37.

Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment, and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.

Afflictions shall last no longer than till they have done the work for which they were sent. When this prince is brought to own God's dominion over him, he is then restored to a dominion over himself.—M. HENRY.

A consideration of the benefits of afflictions, should teach us to bear them patiently, when they fall to our lot; and to be thankful to Heaven for having planted such barriers around us, to restrain the exuberance of our folly and our crime. Let these sacred fences be removed, exempt the ambitious from disappointment, and the guilty from remorse, let luxury go unattended with disease, and indiscretion lead into no embarrassments or distresses; our vices would range without control, and the impetuosity of our passions have no bounds; every family would be filled with strife, every nation with carnage, and a deluge

of calamities would break in upon us, which would produce more misery in a year, than is inflicted by the hand of Providence in a lapse of ages.—ROBERT HALL.

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HOSEA ii. 6.

Therefore, behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths.

A double allusion: first, to cattle that are apt to stray, “I will hedge up thy way with thorns;” secondly, to the sea, which is apt to overflow the country, “I will build a wall to prevent inundations.” Holy Basil was a long time sorely afflicted with an inveterate head-ache; he often prayed for the removal of it; at last God removed it, but in the room of it he was sorely exercised with the motions and temptations of sin; which, when he perceived, he heartily desired his head-ache again, to prevent a worse evil. You little know the ends and uses of many of your afflictions. Are you exercised with bodily weaknesses? It is a mercy you are so; and if these pains and infirmities were removed, these clogs taken off, you might, with Basil, wish for them again to

prevent worse evils. Are you poor? Why, with that poverty God hath clogged your pride. Are you reproached? With those reproaches God hath clogged your ambition. Corruptions are prevented by your afflictions. And is not this a marvellous help to holiness of life?—FLAVEL.

We have reason to bless God for restraining grace, and for restraining providences.—M. HENRY.

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HOSEA, v. 15.

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early.

It is true, a good man is always a praying man; he considers prayer as the grand mean of intercourse with God. But how differently he feels in the hour of affliction to what he does at other times! He has often reason to lament over the insensibility of his heart, and the cold manner in which his supplications are presented before the throne. But when affliction comes, what life and energy does it put into his prayers! He does not then want words to express himself; it is not then a

formal service; his whole heart is engaged; yea, he finds it his privilege that he can take his afflictions to God; and that while he is surrounded by the tempest, he can implore the protection of Him who hath all things under his command. Ah! how many can look back to the place of affliction, and say, "There it was my soul poured out many prayers to the Lord; there I prayed indeed; there I knew what communion with God meant; there I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears!" Nearness to God is the happiness of the renewed soul. Affliction is but one of his servants, to bring us into the enjoyment of this privilege. God delights to hear from us often, as the kind parent loves to hear from his child when at a distance from home. Affliction comes and knocks at the door, enters into our habitation, and stays with us for a season, to remind us of our duty; to reprove us for our neglect; and to stimulate us to greater mindfulness of, and dependence on, our best Friend.—BUCK.

Humbled in the lowest deep,  
Thee I for my sufferings bless;

Think of all thy love, and weep  
For my own unfaithfulness :  
I have most rebellious been,  
Thou hast laid thine hand on me,  
Kindly visited my sin,  
Scourged the wanderer back to thee.

Taught obedience to my God  
By the things I have endured,  
Meekly now I kiss the rod,  
Wounded by the rod and cured :  
Good for me the grief and pain,  
Let me but thy grace adore,  
Keep the pardon I regain,  
Stand in awe, and sin no more.

CHARLES WESLEY.

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AMOS, iii. 6.

Is there evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?

Let men but awaken their reason and conscience, who is it that is at the upper end of causes? So in private afflictions, David owned God's hand: Shimei had mocked him; but he looks higher, "The Lord hath bid him curse." So Job; he doth not say the Chaldean or Sabeen hath taken away, but "the Lord hath

taken," Job, i. 21. Afflictions have a higher cause than men ordinarily look at; they do not come out of the dust, but come from God. See what inference Eliphaz draws from this principle, Job, v. 8, "I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause." That is, I would go and deal with him about it: it was Eliphaz's advice to Job, and it is seasonable to us all.—DR. MANTON.

Providential dispensations are to be considered as visits from God. Is affliction the Christian's lot? It is a visit from heaven. "Thou hast visited me," says David. God never uses the flail, but when his corn wants threshing.—TOPLADY.

Our hearts are fastened to the world  
By strong and various ties,  
But every sorrow cuts a string,  
And urges us to rise.

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MICAH, VI. 9.

Hear ye the rod, and who hath appointed it.

Every rod has a voice, and it is the voice of God that is to be heard in the rod of God; and it is well for them that understand the

language of it, which, if we would do, we must have an eye to Him that appointed it. Every rod is appointed, of what kind it shall be, where it shall light, and how long it shall lie: God, in every affliction, “performeth the thing that is appointed for us,” Job, xxiii. 14; and to him, therefore, we must have an eye, to him we must have an ear; hear what he saith to us by the affliction, “hear it, and know it for thy good,” Job, v. 27.—M. HENRY.

Dear Father, if thy lifted rod  
 Resolve to scourge us here below,  
 Still we must lean upon our God.  
 Thine arm shall bear us safely through.

DR. WATTS.

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MICAHA, vii. 9.

I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him.

When God is angry, and chastiseth for sin, we must stoop humbly under his afflicting hand, bear it patiently and submissively, for the rod is dipped in our own guilt; that stoppeth our mouths, and checketh repinings: so seeing his faithfulness, it maketh us accept

the punishment of our iniquities, Lev. xxvi. 41, that is, yield to it, as a man would to a bitter potion, or a medicinal preparation for his health; so to afflict, is as a means to get rid of sin, which would be the bane of the soul.—DR. MANTON.

That eminently pious man, the Rev. JOHN DOD, who died in Northamptonshire, in 1645, at the advanced age of ninety-six, used to say to his sick friends, “Afflictions are God’s potions, which we may sweeten by faith and faithful prayer; but we, for the most part, make them bitter, putting into God’s cup the evil ingredients of our impatience and unbelief.”

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ZEPHANIAH, iii. 12.

I will leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord.

God hath no delight in afflicting his children; he joys and delights in the prosperity of his children. It is our sinful nature that makes it necessary for him to afflict us, that he may wean us from the world, because we are prone to surfeit upon things here below. All that God doth is that we may trust in



him, which we should never do, unless he did afflict us, and make us poor in spirit; but when we are afflicted, and poor in spirit, and have nothing at home, we then go out abroad, as people in necessity will do. Supply must be had, either at home, or from without; and when the soul is beaten and driven out of itself, which requires much ado, then we are fit for this blessed act here spoken of,—to trust in the name of the Lord.—SIBBS.

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## ZECHARIAH, xiii. 9.

And I will bring the third part through the fire.

Those whom God sets apart for himself must pass through a probation and purification in this world; they must be tried, that their faith may be found to praise and honour, as Abraham's faith was, when it was tried by the command given him to offer up Isaac: "Now know I that thou fearest me." They must be tried, that both they that are perfect, and they that are not, may be made manifest. They must be refined from their dross, their corruption must be purged out, they must be brightened and bettered.—M. HENRY.

Suppose, Christian, the furnace be seven times hotter, it is but to make you seven times better: fiery trials make golden Christians.—

DYER.

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MARK, v. 5.

When Jesus saw their faith, he saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Sin is the procuring cause of all our pains and sicknesses. The word of Christ was to take his thoughts off from the disease, which was the effect, and to lead them to the sin, the cause, that he might be more concerned about that, to get that pardoned. God doth then graciously take away the sting and malignity of sickness, when he forgives sin; recovery from sickness is then a mercy, indeed, when way is made for it by the pardon of sin. The way to remove the effect is to take away the cause. Pardon of sin strikes at the root of all diseases, and either cures them or alters their property.—M. HENRY.

If sin be pardoned I'm secure,  
Death hath no sting beside ;  
The law gave sin its damning power,  
But Christ, my ransom, died.

## LUKE, XXII. 42.

Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me : nevertheless, not my will but thine be done.

This must be our pattern, and we should endeavour, in the use of all proper means, to bring our hearts to a correspondent temper, and the like submission. Particularly endeavour it by prayer, waiting and begging for the Divine Spirit to impress and form your hearts hereunto. Observe the workings of your own minds on all occasions, and never suffer a rebellious, tumultuous thought to arise uncensured. This is your duty; here is your peace and happiness, and the perfection of it will, in part, be your heaven.—BENJAMIN BENNET.

All religion lies in conforming our wills to the will of God; that there should be but one will between God and us, and that this should be his most wise and righteous will. The will of his precept he hath made known to us by his word, and to that we ought to submit our wills.—BP. HOPKINS.

Do not say that it is impossible to reduce these exhortations to practice. Many suffering saints have experienced the contrary. When the late Rev. John Townsend, the be-

nevolent founder of the Deaf and Dumb Society, was suffering extreme pain in his last illness, he exclaimed "Human nature cannot bear this long. What must have been the sufferings of the martyrs at the stake! What must have been the Saviour's agony, when, in the prospect of death, he cried out, Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done! What are my sufferings compared to the Saviour's in the garden, when he sweat, as it were, great drops of blood! Father of mercies, hear my poor prayer, if not to relieve, help me to bear and suffer."

The lovely bird of Paradise—Christian contentment—can sit and sing in the cage of affliction and confinement, or fly at liberty through the vast expanse, with almost equal satisfaction; while "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight," is the chief note in the celestial song.—SWAIN.

One prayer I have, all prayers in one,  
When I am wholly thine;  
Thy will, my God, thy will be done,  
And let that will be mine.

All-wise, Almighty, and All-good,  
In thee I firmly trust;  
Thy ways, unknown or understood,  
Are merciful and just.

MONTGOMERY.

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JOHN, v. 14.

Behold, thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.

Christ intimates that those who are made whole, that are eased of the present sensible punishment of sin, are in danger of returning to sin, when the terror and restraint of that is over, unless Divine grace dry up the fountain. When the trouble which only confined the current is over, the waters will return to their old course; and, therefore, there is need of great watchfulness, lest, after healing mercy, we return again to folly. The misery we were made whole from, warns us to sin no more, having felt the smart of sin; the mercy we were made whole by, is an engagement upon us not to offend Him who healed us. This is the voice of every providence, "Go and sin no more." This man began his new life very hopefully in the temple, yet Christ

saw it necessary to give him this caution; for it is common for people, when they are sick, to promise much; when newly recovered to perform something; but after a while to forget all.—M. HENRY.

Sin has brought many a believer into suffering; and suffering has kept many a believer from sinning.—DYER.



JOHN, XI. 3.

Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick.

It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves to be sick; all things come alike to all; bodily distempers correct the corruptions, and try the grace of God's people.—M. HENRY.

Some of Cyprian's people happened to be staggered in their minds, because they found that Christians were liable to be afflicted with the plague as others. Upon which he explained to them, that, IN SPIRIT, the children of God are indeed separated from the rest of mankind; but that, in all other respects, they are exposed to the common evils of human life. In his usual manner, he supported his precepts by scripture examples, and spoke

eloquently and solidly of the benefits of affliction, and of the opportunity of showing what spirit they were of. "Let that man fear to die," said he, "who has the second death to undergo; who is not born of water and the Spirit; who is not a partaker of the cross and passion of Christ; and whom eternal flames will torment with perpetual punishment. To such a one life is, indeed, a desirable object, because it delays his condemnation. But what have good men to dread from death? They are called by it to an eternal refreshment."

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## JOHN, XI. 4.

This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

The sickness of good people, how threatening soever, is not unto death; for it is not to eternal death. The body's death to this world is the soul's birth into another world. When we or our friends are sick, we make it our principal support that there is hope of a recovery; but in that we may be disappointed; therefore, it is our wisdom to build upon that in which we cannot be disap-



pointed: if we belong to Christ, let the worst come to the worst, we cannot be hurt of the second death, and then not much hurt of the first.—M. HENRY.

O happy sickness, where the infirmity is not to death, but to life, that God may be glorified by it! O happy fever, that proceedeth not from a consuming, but a calcining fire! O happy distemper, wherein the soul relisheth no earthly things, but only savoureth Divine nourishment!—GISTEN.

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JOHN, xviii. 11.

Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

And shortly after he indeed drunk it to the bottom. Affliction is also a bitter cup to the saints; and they, as Christ, pray again and again, yea, thrice against it, because, to sense, no chastening seemeth joyous but grievous, Heb. xii. 11; though grace persuades them to drink it, and faith gives them a taste of much sweetness when they have drunk it. As a sick man is backward to take a distasteful medicine till his reason hath overcome his



feelings, so a godly man is unwilling to bear afflictions till his faith hath overcome his reason; nor can he quietly endure the troublesome smart of the rod, till he is assured of “the peaceable fruits of righteousness” which grow from it, to those who are exercised by it.—CARYL.

How bitter that cup no heart can conceive,  
The Saviour drunk up, that sinners might live!  
His way was much rougher and darker than mine,  
Did Christ, my Lord, suffer, and shall I repine?

Since all that I meet shall work for my good,  
The bitter is sweet, the medicine is food;  
Though painful at present, ’twill cease before long,  
And then, oh how pleasant the conqueror’s song.

NEWTON.

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ACTS, xiv. 22.

We must, through much tribulation, enter into the kingdom of God.

Afflictions, like the waters of Marah, must be met with in our way to the heavenly Canaan; there is no coming at the crown but by the cross; the Head having been crowned

with thorns, it is unsuitable that the feet should tread on roses.—BURKITT.

Why should I complain of want or distress,  
Temptation or pain? he told me no less:  
The heirs of salvation, I know from his word,  
Through much tribulation must follow their Lord.  
NEWTON.

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ROMANS, v. 3.

Tribulation worketh patience.

Perhaps when the Lord first lays his hand upon us and touches “our bone and our flesh,” we fret and toss like bullocks unaccustomed to the yoke, and say, in the frenzy of our grief, “I do well to be angry. This evil is of the Lord, why should I wait for the Lord any longer?” Such, in the beginning of an affliction, are the impious ravings of an unsubdued spirit. But, by degrees, our passions subside, and, like the prodigal, when he began to be in want, we come to ourselves, and humbly say, “Lord, show me wherefore thou contendest with me.” Ah! if the Lord were to reveal to us all that is amiss in our hearts and our lives, we should be startled at

the sight of so much deformity and pollution. But he shows us enough to make us abhor ourselves, and sincerely repent in dust and ashes. Then, instead of complaining that our affliction is heavy, we are thankful that it is not heavier; and if nature dare murmur, grace presently checks it, with saying, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good; I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him." In this manner "tribulation worketh patience."—LAVINGTON.

See a good man confined with a broken limb, or painful disease; he is cut off, perhaps, in part from society; he must not move; he cannot pursue the avocations of life as usual; he is imprisoned for a while; those who stand by look upon him and pity him, and feel themselves pleased that it is not their lot, and that they are not called to bear such an affliction. But how good is God; while he takes one blessing he gives another. This object before us, perhaps, is not so wretched as we imagine. He has learned patience by his affliction; he submits to the Divine will; he finds it best to wait quietly for deliverance. "It might," says he, "have been worse: God

is still wise and merciful, I must not, I dare not complain." What a pleasant sight is it thus to behold patience having its perfect work!—BUCK.

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## ROMANS, v. 4, 5.

And patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed.

While patience is the fruit of the Christian's conflicts and trials, he gains experience by them: he acquires the knowledge which a traveller obtains in performing a long journey; he is in possession of a bundle of choice maxims and observations, gathered with much pains; he is taught by them to know his own heart; he is brought acquainted with the faithfulness and mercy of God in holding him up in the deep waters, and accompanying him through the fire of affliction. And this experience produces hope: a hope that he is savingly united to Christ; a hope that he is in the church of God; a "hope of the glory of God;" a hope that "maketh not ashamed," keeping us steady at anchor through every storm, and when every other support fails.—CECIL.

In the year 1799, the celebrated LAVATER was humanely relieving some poor widows from the importunities of the French soldiery, whom he accommodated at his own house with meat and drink, when one of the ruffians shot him a little below the heart, and the ball went out on the right side. From the effects of this dangerous wound he recovered for a short interval, and, in his first sermon, he made this avowal, "O thou adorable Preserver of my life, how near hast thou brought me to the very brink of the grave! but one step further, and I could no longer have praised thee among my fellow-mortals. Thou art my hope. It is no vain boast, but a profitable truth, which may be usefully applied, that though naturally I am one of the most timid beings, yet my God has filled me with unshaken confidence. He has so confirmed this by innumerable instances of his admirable condescension to my most particular wants, and my boldest petitions, especially during the present very remarkable year, that I cannot but repeat these words: 'Thou art my hope.' My reason must fail me if my confidence should: my heart and my spirit must entirely be changed, and I become another

being, before I could renounce my hope in God.”

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## ROMANS, viii. 18.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

Sufferings are not to be compared and looked upon in respect, first, of the punishment that we have deserved, which is passed by and pardoned; and then, not to be compared and reckoned with the present grace and comfort that God's people have here; but, then, much less are they to be compared and reckoned with the weight of glory that is to come, that is promised to us.—BERNARD.

My Lord, my Life, O cheer my heart  
With thy reviving ray,  
And bid these mournful shades depart,  
And bring the dawn of day!

O happy scenes of pure delight!  
Where thy full beams impart  
Unclouded beauty to the sight,  
And rapture to the heart.

Her part in those fair realms of bliss,  
My spirit longs to know:  
My wishes terminate in this,  
Nor can they rest below.

MRS. STEELE.

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ROMANS, viii. 28.

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

And as all things work together for the good of them who are the called according to his purpose, so it is the purpose of God that all things should work together for their good, and that is not a successless purpose. Indeed, every rod upon the backs of the wicked hath a voice in it, to call them from the pit of death and destruction, and to be enlightened with the light of the living; but God makes this call effectual to all his elect, none of whom shall perish with the world. So that a godly man should be so far from judging himself dealt with as an enemy, as Job in his extremity did, when he is most sorely afflicted, that, indeed, he may see the love and fatherly care of God in it. All the

providential dispensations of God work to glorious ends; sometimes for the outward good of his people in this life, always for good as to their spiritual and eternal life.—

CARYL.

All the seeming accidents observable in the world subserve the same end, and centre in one point. They tend to promote the glory of the Father, and the salvation of the children. Every sickness and infirmity which are laid upon you, every loss that you sustain, every reproach that you suffer, every scorn that reddens your cheeks, and every grief that saddens your hearts, every pain and torture which rend you, and every ache in your bones, are intended for your good. Every alteration in your circumstances, your foul and fair weather, your cloudy and sunshiny days, your ebbings and flowings, your plenty and scarcity, your freedom and imprisonment, your health and sickness, your life and death, do all work together for your good. O Christians! see what a harvest of blessedness springs up from this text.—ROWLAND.



## ROMANS, xii. 12.

Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.

Hope, patience, and prayer, are powerful supports under all afflictions, and will render them not only tolerable, but joyous. By patience, we possess ourselves; by hope, we possess God; by prayer, we are enabled unto both.—BURKITT.

O my soul, what means this sadness?

Wherefore art thou thus cast down?

Let thy griefs be turned to gladness,

Bid thy restless fears be gone;

Look to Jesus,

And rejoice in his dear name.

FAWCETT.

## 1 CORINTHIANS, iii. 21—23.

For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's.

“All is ours” if we are Christ's, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas. All the gifts, graces, labours, and prayers of all gospel mi-

nisters; and all gospel ordinances, are appointed and designed for our good, (Ephes. iv. 11—13,) for the gathering of us in, and for the perfecting and building of us up in Christ Jesus, until we all come to heaven. The world is ours; the good and evil of it, the bitter and the sweet of it, the comforts and the crosses of it, the gains and the losses of it, the love and the hate of it, the smiles and the frowns, the friends and foes in it; all is designed for, and shall promote our spiritual and eternal welfare. Life is ours. All the trouble, sickness, pain, evil tidings, persecutions, disappointments, losses of relations, shame, reproach, or whatever attends this mortal life, shall be sanctified and blessed to us for our good. Yea, death is ours; it shall be our gain, it shall put a full end to all our sin and suffering, and be the door of entrance for us into the glory of our Father's house. All things present—our present fears, sorrows, infirmities, shall be so ordered and overruled by the wisdom and love of our Father, that they shall all help us onward to heaven. And things to come are ours: all that glory to be revealed; that saints' everlasting rest which is prepared for the people of God; that

crown of righteousness, of glory, and of life; that kingdom of glory; that unspeakable, that inconceivable state of happiness and blessedness which Christ our Lord has purchased by his blood: all this is ours also. But how come we to have a right and title to all this? Why, says the apostle, thus: "Ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." As sure as Christ is God's, so sure, if you be Christ's, all is yours: and, as I have proved, if we be true believers in Christ, then we are Christ's.—

BUNYAN.

When the Rev. James Hervey was dying, he spoke of the above text: "All things are yours," said he, "life and death, for ye are Christ's." Here is the treasure of a Christian. Death is reckoned among this inventory, and a noble treasure it is. How thankful am I for death, as it is the passage through which I pass to the Lord and Giver of life; and as it frees me from all this misery you now see me endure, and which I am willing to endure, as long as God sees fit; for I know he will, by and bye, in his own good time, dismiss me from the body.

## 2 CORINTHIANS, i. 3, 4.

The God of all comfort : who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

All consolation belongs to God; he hath all comfort in his own power and disposal; there is not any creature in the world can give out the least drop of comfort to us, without the commission or leave of God; it is possible for one man to give another man riches, but he cannot give him comfort; man may give honour to man, but he cannot give him comfort. A man may have a pleasant dwelling, a loving wife, sweet children, and yet none of these a comfort to him. The consolation of all our possessions and relations is from God. Whosoever would have comfort, must trade to heaven for it; that's a commodity which can be found upon no earthly coast; you may fetch in wealth from many coasts of the earth, but you cannot fetch in comfort, till you address yourselves to the God of heaven. We can procure our own sorrow quickly, but God only makes us to rejoice; our relief from outward affliction, or inward grief, is the gift of God. He only can comfort us in outward

afflictions who can command the creature ; and he only can comfort us against our inward griefs, who can convince the conscience. None can do either of these but God, therefore consolations are from God.—CARYL.

Who has not by accident, or disease, been confined to the chamber of weariness and pain ? and who, by the sympathies, attentions, and soothings of the tenderest friendship, has comforted you upon the bed of languishing, and made all your bed in your sickness ? And who, when the graves were ready for you, and you said, “ I shall behold man no more with the inhabitants of the world,”—who comforted you by the return of ease, the re-glowing of health, the renewal of your strength, the resumption of your liberty, so that all your bones said, “ Who is a God like unto Thee ? ”

Has a friend, like ointment and perfume, rejoiced your heart by the sweetness of his counsel ? or has a minister been the helper of your faith and joy ? The Lord gave him the tongue of the learned, that he should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary. God comforted you by the coming of Titus.

The heathen made idols of every thing that afforded them relief and comfort, and thus they loved and served the creature more than the Creator. Let us not resemble them, but remember, that whatever may be the medium of our comfort, God is the only source of it. Thus the instrument, instead of seducing us from God, will be a conductor to him, and the stream will lead us to the Fountain of life.—JAY.

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2 CORINTHIANS, IV. 16.

For this cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day.

If you value yourselves on your outward condition, you will still be entangled; you should more highly esteem, and be more solicitous about the welfare of your souls in a time of affliction, than of all things else in the world: and you will more easily submit, and more wisely consider of the Lord's doing, and the better understand your interest. When the main care is about your souls, you will value other losses the less, as long as your jewel is in safe hands.—DR. MANTON.

'Mid the gloom, the vivid lightnings,  
With increasing brightness play;  
'Mid the thorn-brake sweetest flowerets  
Look more beautiful and gay:  
Sweet affliction  
That brings Jesus to my soul.

PEARCE.

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2 CORINTHIANS, iv. 17.

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

Two things render affliction either easy or intolerable; to wit, its kind, and its continuance. If it be ponderous and crushing, and withal continual, this makes affliction break all the bones, and wound the very spirit. But when it is light, and over in a moment, which is the case with all the afflictions that befall the people of God, I wonder why or how I can complain. But how astonishing beyond expression must it be, that this light and transitory load of affliction should work for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! Truly, I have no reason to cry out of my troubles, since they work more good for me than now I can conceive. And little do



I think, while grappling with my afflictions and my fears, what they are procuring for me in the highest heavens; God having so connected the seed-time of tears with the harvest of glory, that they who sow weeping, shall reap with everlasting joy. Would I grudge to carry a stone for a day or two, if assured that when I laid it down, I should receive a crown of gold? Why then repine under my afflictions. But again, What proportion is there between the cross and the crown, the trial and the triumph, the affliction and the comfort, the burden of grief and the exceeding weight of glory? no more than between the glorious Giver, and the glorified receiver.—MEIKLE.

Do but admire the beauty of the position, and how the good is set against the evil, like two scales differently filled. The affliction is light, and but for a moment; the glory is a weight, and it is forever! Here is a feather against lead, a grain of sand against the universe, a moment against eternity! Oh how the scale that contains this world's light trouble kicks the beam, when set in competition with the glory that shall be revealed in us!—MRS. H. MORE.



This weight of glory should make sufferings light. This weight should make us throw away the weights of sin out of our hands, though they be golden weights. Who would, for the indulging of a lust, forfeit so glorious an inheritance?—WATSON.

All I meet I find assists me  
In my path to heavenly joy,  
Where, though trials now attend me,  
Trials never more annoy :  
Sweet affliction,  
Thus to lead to endless joy.

Blest there with a weight of glory,  
Still the path I'll ne'er forget ;  
But exulting, cry, it led me  
To my blessed Saviour's seat :  
Sweet affliction,  
Which has brought to Jesus' feet.

PEARCE.

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2 CORINTHIANS, v. 1.

For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

Let us contemplate the feeble structure of this earthly tabernacle, which gives us so many tokens of its nearly approaching disso-

lution; this tabernacle, in which we groan under such a variety of burdens; and let us comfort ourselves with the prospect of speedy deliverance; that so, while the outward man perisheth, the inner man may be renewed day by day. What! though we have death before us in certain prospect, and know we must soon be absent from the body? If we are true Christians, we have the most express assurance, not only that the time will come, when we shall inhabit a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; but that we shall immediately be present with the Lord, with that blessed Redeemer, whom having not seen we love. How much more shall we love him, how much more shall we rejoice in him, when we are blessed with his presence, and behold his glory.—DR. DODDRIDGE.

DR. ANDREW RIVET, who died at Breda, in the year 1651, in his last affliction, alluded to this portion of Scripture, and said, “I know, O Lord, that this tabernacle cannot be dissolved without pain. The heart is yet strong, and I have yet many pangs to suffer. Lord, help my infirmities! Depart not from me in the day of my distress! Say to my

soul, I am He that can deliver thee. The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.”

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## 2 CORINTHIANS, v. 4.

For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.

When the apostle is carried up on those eagle wings of assurance to see a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, then he groans earnestly under the burden of his earthly tabernacle, and desires to die; yet, looking upon death, he saw no form or comeliness in that, why he should desire it; and, therefore, he seems to correct himself, at least to draw his mind plainer with the next drop of his pen, “not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life.” He speaks somewhat like a man, who in a time of heat hastily strips himself to go into the water, but putting a foot in, and finding it cold, calls for his clothes again. The apostle in a true, holy heat of spirit, had in his desires almost stript himself of his body, but putting a foot into

the grave, he found that so cold, that he had no great mind to it, and therefore had rather keep on the clothing of his body, and have a suit of glory over it, than lay it down. The saints desire to live with Christ, but in itself, they desire not to die: they had rather their mortality should be swallowed up of eternal life, than their temporal life should be swallowed up of mortality. They that have grace like not the disunions of nature.—CARYL.

There is a land of pure delight,  
Where saints immortal reign;  
Infinite day excludes the night,  
And pleasures banish pain.

There everlasting spring abides,  
And never-withering flowers;  
Death, like a narrow sea divides,  
This heavenly land from ours.

But timorous mortals start and shrink  
To cross this narrow sea;  
And linger, shivering, on the brink,  
And fear to launch away.

Could we but climb where Moses stood,  
And view the landscape o'er,

Not Jordan's stream, nor death's cold flood,  
Should fright us from the shore.

DR. WATTS.

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2 CORINTHIANS, vii. 6.

Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus.

Titus was a good man, and brought good tidings, yet Paul doth not say that the coming of Titus did comfort them; but, saith Paul, "God comforted us by the coming of Titus." It is not your friend who comforts you, but God who comforts you by the coming of such a friend, when you are in sorrow; by sending in such relief when you are poor; by sending such medicines when you are sick, such salves when you are sore, such counsel when you are in doubt, and know not what to do.—  
CARYL.

"To comfort the heart, is more than to make a world," said the holy and tempted LUTHER. And the pious young M'EWEN, the estimable writer on "The Types," has remarked, that "consolation is a commodity of heaven, not to be imported but from the distant country of Immanuel. It is God alone,

the God of peace, to whom almighty power belongeth, that can comfort the soul."

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PHILIPPIANS, i. 21.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

And well may a Christian count death among his gains, since it is the hand of death that draws the curtain of the great tabernacle, and lets in to see God face to face! in that palace of inestimable majesty, where we shall have the strong rays of his glory beat full upon us, and be ourselves made strong enough to bear them.—BP. HOPKINS.

DR. FINLAY, president of New Jersey college, who died in 1766, on being asked if he preferred to live or die, said, "To die: though I cannot but say I feel the same strait that Paul did, 'for me to live is Christ, but to die is gain:' but should God by a miracle prolong my life, I will still continue to serve him. I have tried my Master's yoke, and will never shrink my neck from it. His yoke is easy, and his burden light."

HEBREWS, iv. 15.

For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities.

Christ is deeply sensible of all our burdens, all our sorrows. Such sometimes is the case with the saints, that among men they have none to pity them, and sympathize with them under their burdens. But even then, Christ bears the other end of the burden; he pities them, and sympathizes with them, and that according to the weight of their burden. And oh, how sweet is that! “No matter,” said an holy man, “how heavy the burden be, so long as Christ bears the other end of it.”—  
PEARSE.

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HEBREWS, vi. 19.

Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil.

The Christian's hope is fastened in heaven, confirmed by the fidelity of God's promises, and the prevailing intercession of Christ, and secured to us in the midst of all the turbulent agitations in the wide sea below. Hope makes

us not only patient, but joyful in all our sufferings. A Christian encouraged by the blessed hope, comes with joy to death, as the door that opens to the kingdom of glory and immortal blessedness.—DR. BATES.

When DR. DODDRIDGE was dying, he said, “I have no hope in what I have been or done. Yet, I am full of confidence; and this is my confidence, there is a hope set before me; I have fled, I still fly for refuge to that hope. In Him I trust; in Him I have strong consolation, and shall assuredly be accepted in this Beloved of my soul.”

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HEBREWS, XII. 5.

My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him.

Some are discouraged and overborne by afflictions as insupportable: others are stubborn and careless, and never lay them to heart: they never look upward to the original efficient cause—an offended God, nor inward to the impulsive deserving cause—their sins; but esteem them fortuitous events that happen in this mutable state, without a design to correct



and inform sinners; or to proceed from a blind necessity, things of course; or merely regard the second causes and instruments of their troubles. Accordingly, when they meet with calamities, all their care is, by a perverse shift, to seek for relief only in temporal comforts; without seriously applying themselves to God, whose end in sending troubles, is to reclaim us from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, from the creatures to himself.—DR. BATES.

Even as a nurse, whose child's imperfect pace,  
Can hardly lead his foot from place to place,  
Leaves her fond kissing, sits him down to go,  
Nor does uphold him for a step or two:  
But when she finds that he begins to fall,  
She holds him up, and kisses him withal:  
So God from man sometimes withdraws his hand  
Awhile, to teach his infant faith to stand;  
But when he sees his feeble strength begin  
To fail, he gently takes him up again.  
Lord, I'm a child; so guide my paces, then,  
That I may learn to walk an upright man;  
So shield my faith, that I may never doubt thee,  
For I shall fall, if ere I walk without thee.

QUARLES.

## HEBREWS, xii 6.

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

There is not a stronger evidence of his fatherly, wise love, than the discipline of the rod, and the afflicted returning sinner may with an adoptive assurance come to the throne of grace. By afflictions the world is less enticing and hurtful to us, and heaven is more amiable and desirable: the things that are seen are vilified and distasted, and invisible things are sought with our highest esteem and respect, and zealous endeavours. Those lusts that spring, and grow, and flourish in prosperity, are blasted, and wither and die in adversity. Those who forget God when prosperous in the world, are taught by the voice of the rod, to adore his Majesty, obey his laws, imitate his holiness, and humbly to accept of his mercy. By afflictions the sensual appetites are subdued, and brought into order; a low state is a protection from many strong and destructive temptations. Sickness that brings near the grave, and makes us feel how frail we are, renders the world despicable, that by their lusts so powerfully infatuates

men to their ruin. Sanctified affliction, is a happy preparative for the fulness of joy in the blessed presence of God.—DR. BATES.

My God, my Father, blíssful name!

O may I call thee mine;

May I with sweet assurance claim

A portion so divine?

This only can my fears control,

And bid my sorrows fly;

What harm can ever reach my soul,

Beneath my Father's eye?

MRS. STEELE.

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HEBREWS, xii. 7.

If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

That is, if without murmuring or fainting, if with that respect and subjection which is due to the high and holy providence of God, then we may be assured of his paternal relation to us, and his rod comforts us, as the strokes of it are an argument of his care and love to us. From hence proceeds inexpressible and peculiar consolation to afflicted Christians: the same afflictions, as to matter

and circumstances, may be upon humble meek sufferers and refractory stubborn sinners “that kick against the pricks;” but they are distinguished by the intention of God. They are sent to the humble, as corrections from the wise love of a Father, who dearly regards their souls; to the obdurate, as vengeance from the righteous severity of a Judge. Upon the humble they fall as soft as a shower of snow; upon the other, as the storm of fiery hail upon the Egyptians; and the issue of them is different as heaven and hell.—DR. BATES.

Among the excellent words of advice to a patient, given by a pious physician, DR. STONEHOUSE, are the following: “Lift up your heart to God from time to time; and say humbly, whilst you are bearing his chastisement, ‘Show me wherefore thou contendest with me. What I know not, teach thou me; and wherein I have done iniquity, may I do so no more.’ Yield yourself with a true filial submission to the rod of your heavenly Father; bear it patiently; bear it thankfully; let thoughts of most unfeigned love to him as your Father mingle themselves with all you suffer from his hand;

and labour earnestly, that whether the health of your body be recovered, or continue to decline more and more, the health of your mind may be greatly promoted by this course of discipline, and by every day of it.”

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## HEBREWS, XII. 8.

But, if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.

A joyous state of freedom from affliction, is such as we ought to watch over with great jealousy and fear, lest it should be a leaving us out of the discipline of the family of God; not that we may desire afflictions, as such, much less exerceate and torment ourselves; but we may pray that we may not want any pledge of our adoption, leaving the ordering and disposal of all things to the will of God.—

BURKITT.

Take care, Christian, whatever you meet with in your way, that you forget not your Father! When the proud and wealthy rush by in triumph, while you are poor and in sorrow, hear the voice of your Father, saying, ‘My son, had I loved them, I should have

corrected them too. I give them up to the ways of their own hearts; but to my children, if I give sorrow, it is that I may lead them to a crown of glory that fadeth not away.'—  
CECIL.

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## HEBREWS, XII. 9.

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

The two persons whom the apostle compares together, that is, God and man, have this in common, one and the other is a father, one and the other chasteneth, one and the other is carried out to it by love, one and the other designs advantage; but as there is this resemblance, so there is a great difference; man is but the father of the body, the more ignoble part of our natures, that which we have common with beasts. God is the Father of our spirits, the more noble part, and that which makes us properly men; more submission is, therefore, due to Him, who confers more upon us, than to those who confer less. The love which fathers bear to their children

is a passion, and many times is not regulated by reason; but the love of God is a true love, not mingled with any imperfection either of excess or defect, and, therefore, doth nothing but with the justest reason. Again, earthly fathers aim at the good of their children, but their ignorance is so great that often they mistake it; but the knowledge of God is as perfect as his love, who always chastiseth his people for their true good, and, therefore, a greater submission is due to him.—CHARNOCK.

Dear Father, we consent  
To discipline divine;  
And bless the pains that make our souls  
Still more completely thine.

DR. DODDRIDGE.

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HEBREWS, xii. 10.

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

The apostle here specifies the immediate end of God in his chastenings. This is the supreme excellency of the Divine nature; and our conformity to it is so valuable, that it

renders afflictions not only tolerable, but so far desirable as they contribute to it. In the present state, our graces are imperfect, and our conformity to the Divine purity is like the resemblance of the sun in a watery cloud, very much beneath the perfection and radiancy of that great light. Now God is pleased to fashion us according to his image by afflictions, as a statue is cut by the artificer, to bring it into a beautiful form. He is pleased to bring us into divers temptations, to try our faith, to work in us patience, to inflame our prayers, to mortify our carnal desires, to break those voluntary bonds whereby we are fettered to the earth, that we may live with those affections, wherewith others die. And certainly if we make a true judgment of things, we have not the least cause to suspect the love of God when he chastises us to take away sin, the only abominable object of his hatred and deep detestation, and to render us partakers of the Divine nature.—DR. BATES.

Whate'er thy sacred will ordains,  
O give me strength to bear;  
And let me know my Father reigns,  
And trust his tender care.



Thy sovereign ways are all unknown  
To my weak, erring sight;  
Yet let my soul adoring own,  
That all thy ways are right.

My God, my Father, be thy name  
My solace and my stay;  
Lord, wilt thou seal my humble claim,  
And drive my fears away.

MRS. STEELE.

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HEBREWS, xii. 11.

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby,

It is an allusion to the rewards in the Olympic games, when the persons that overcame in those exercises were crowned with wreaths of olive-leaves, the emblem of peace. Thus Christians, who, with unfainting perseverance in their duty, suffer affliction, shall be rewarded with holiness, in conjunction with peace. This peaceable fruit of righteousness is not the natural product of affliction: grapes do not spring from thorns, nor figs from thistles; neither can it be so properly ascribed to the

afflicted person, as to the powerful virtue and special grace of the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies afflictions, and makes them profitable for effecting God's intention by them. And when the afflicted person becomes more humble, more holy, more weaned from the world, more resigned to the will of God, this fruit unto holiness, will compensate all his pains and sorrows. And, in conjunction with holiness, there is a divine peace, a holy calm and quietness of conscience, in the sense of God's favour. His answers of peace are usually a reward, according to the operations of grace; his comforts are dispensed as encouragements to obedience. Besides, when the sinful corruptions are purged out, which caused perpetual disturbance, and our affections and actions are correspondent to the Divine law, there is that clearness and serenity of mind, that ease and rest in the soul, arising from its just and due subordination unto God, which the disobedient, in all their seeming prosperity, never enjoy. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." These beginnings of happiness are obtained here, but the perfection of it is in the next life.—DR. BATES

“Grace withereth without adversity,” says the pious RUTHERFORD.

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## JAMES, i. 2.

My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.

One trouble worketh into the hands of another, and the succession of them is as necessary as the first stroke. We often make it necessary for God to renew his corrections: things to which we are accustomed do not affect us; therefore, under a general affliction, there comes in many special ones to rub up our sense, and make it work the better. Under public calamities we have a private one; and they come one on the neck of another like waves. When God hath begun he will make an end, and bring his discipline to some more comfortable and perfect issue. In all these things the wisdom of God is to be observed.—DR. MANTON.

There is not a plant upon earth, how unsightly and bitter soever, but which hath an end for its being. God, likewise, hath not intended his providential works, however ad-

verse or disagreeable to our sense, but for some just purpose and design. There is a needs be, if we “fall into divers temptations:” and if needful, then they are right and profitable, and will appear to be so at last.—  
SERLE.

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JAMES, i. 4.

Let patience have her perfect work.

For afflictions will have their perfect work: when they make long work, let patience make long work too. When God encamps against us, let us speedily give up the strong-holds of sin, but let us maintain the strong-holds of grace, the forts of faith and patience, quitting ourselves like men, or rather like Christians; let us give proof of holy courage in the hottest assaults, and in the longest sieges. The Lord doth not intend ruin to our persons, though he ruin our tabernacles.—CARYL.

If God hath sent thee a cross, take it up, and follow him; use it wisely, lest it be unprofitable; bear it patiently, lest it be intolerable: behold in it God’s anger against sin, and his love towards thee, in punishing the one and chastening the other; if it be slight, slight

it not; if heavy, murmur not: not to be sensible of a judgment is a symptom of a hardened heart, and to be displeased at his displeasure is a sign of a rebellious will.—QUARLES.

If God confirm and augment thy patience under sufferings, sufferings are mercies, afflictions are favours. He blesseth thee by chastisements, and crowneth thee with glory, even while he seems to crown thee with thorns. A perfect patience stoops to the heaviest burdens, and carries them as long as God shall please, without murmuring or repining; and if that be to the grave, it knows that what is now a load, shall then be found to be a treasure. A Christian doth but carry his own wealth, his crown and his sceptre; which, though here they be burdensome, shall hereafter be eternally glorious.—BP. HOPKINS.

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## JAMES, i. 12.

Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

“When he is tried,” when he is approved, when his graces are found to be true, and of the highest worth, (so metals are tried, as to

their excellency, by the fire,) and his integrity is manifested, and all is approved of by the great Judge. Note, that to be approved of God, is the great aim of a Christian in all his trials; and this will be his blessedness at last, when he shall receive the crown of life. The tried Christian shall be a crowned one, and the crown he shall wear will be a crown of life; it will be life and bliss to him, and it will last for ever. We only bear the cross for awhile, but we shall bear the crown to eternity.—M. HENRY.

Oh, reward truly great above desert, yea above conception! A crown for a few groans; an eternal crown of life and glory, for a short and momentary suffering! How just is Paul's account, that the afflictions of this present life are not worthy of the glory which shall be showed unto us! O Lord, let me smart that I may reign; uphold thou me in smarting, that thou mayest hold me worthy of reigning. It is no matter how vile I be, so I may be glorious. What say you? Would you not be afflicted? Whether had you rather mourn for awhile, or for ever? One must be chosen: the selection is easy. Whether had you rather rejoice for one fit or al-

ways? You would do both. Pardon me, it is a fond covetousness, and idle singularity to affect it. What! That you alone may fare better than all God's saints? That God should strew carpets for your nice feet, only to walk into your heaven, and make that way smooth for you, which all patriarchs, prophets, evangelists, confessors, and Christ himself, have found rugged and bloody? Away with this self-love, and come down, ye ambitious sons of Zebedee, and before you think of sitting near the throne, be content to be called unto the cup. Now is your trial; let your Saviour see how much of his bitter potion you can pledge, then shall you see how much of his glory he can afford you. Be content to drink of his vinegar and gall, and you shall drink new wine with him in his kingdom.—  
BP. HALL.

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## JAMES, v. 7.

Be patient, brethren, till the coming of the Lord.

Do you bear the affliction till Christ come and take it off. Let your patience be of the same extent with your sufferings.—CASE.

Affliction is a pill, which, if wrapped up in



patience, may be easily swallowed; but, when discontent puts us upon chewing it, proves bitter and disgusting. Impatience under affliction makes it more grievous; like a man in a fever, who, by tossing and tumbling, exasperates the disease, and increases his own grief.”—FLAVEL.

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## JAMES, v. 13.

Is any among you afflicted? let him pray.

That is the proper season of devotion; what the state of things then peculiarly calls for; and we find that, generally, the temper of our minds agrees thereto. It is, indeed, a shame for us, that we need such a summons into the Divine presence, when it is so much our interest and honour to be there. But God is pleased, in his condescension and grace, to consider our infirmities and wants, and to take methods with us accordingly.—BENJAMIN BENNET.

“Is any afflicted? let him pray,” for that is the surest and speediest way of obtaining relief. It may be the design of God, in blasting earthly comforts, to drive us to our knees. By



bringing us into trouble, and showing us the insufficiency of creatures to help us, he may intend to lead our thoughts up to himself, the fountain of living waters.—LAVINGTON.

O Lord, our strength and righteousness,  
Our hope and refuge in distress,  
Our Saviour, and our God;  
See here, an helpless sinner see,  
Sick and in pain he gasps to thee,  
And waits to feel thy blood.

In sickness make Thou all his bed,  
Thy hand support his fainting head,  
His feeble soul defend;  
Teach him on thee to cast his care,  
And all his grief and burden bear,  
And love him to the end.

CHARLES WESLEY.

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1 PETER, i. 6.

Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations.

“Manifold temptations,” or afflictions. Observe now, Peter puts an “If need be,” or a supposition of necessity, upon the afflictions of believers. As if he had said, “Ye, who are

the candidates of eternity, and heirs of salvation, may judge yourselves past the rod or the ferula, and think now ye have need of nothing but comfort and rejoicing in the hope of that salvation, ready to be revealed; but I tell you, you may have need of heaviness yet, before you come to heaven: and of manifold temptations, for the removing or subduing the corruptions of your hearts, before you enter upon your incorruptible inheritance.” We are apt to conceive chastenings to be of no use, when they are as necessary as our daily bread: therefore, despise not chastenings as useless or unprofitable.—CARYL.

We have many evil humours that require corrections; and God sends adversity, as a medicine for the soul. When it comes with grace into the spirit of a Christian, how doth it soften and blunt his rough and acid dispositions, how reform and lower his swelling and confident frames, how chasten and subdue his restless and impatient tempers! while the better part, his renewed mind, gathers strength and holiness, and resignation and hope. We shall, indeed, thank God heartily for all our adversities by and by; and, though they are not to be counted as any part of our inherit-

ance, we shall rejoice eternally, that they were graciously made a part of the means for bringing us to it. Lazarus himself can now rejoice over all his sores.—AMBROSE SERLE.

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## 1 PETER, i. 7.

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

Other graces are likewise tried in the same furnace, but faith is named as the root of all the rest. Sharp afflictions give a Christian a trial of his love to God, whether it be single and for himself or not; for then it will be the same when he strikes as when he embraces, and in the fire of affliction will rather grow the hotter, and be more taken off from the world and set upon him. Again, the grace of patience is put particularly upon trial in distresses, but both these spring from faith; for love rises from a right and strong belief of the goodness of God; and patience from a persuasion of the wisdom and love of God, and the truth of his promises. He hath said, "I will not forsake thee," and that we shall

not be tempted above our strength, and he will give the issue. Now the belief of these things causes patience. "The trial of faith worketh patience," James, i. 3. For, therefore, doth the Christian resign up himself, and all that concerns him, his trials, the measure and length of them all, unto God's disposal, because he knows that he is in the hands of a wise and loving Father. Thus the trial of these, and other particular graces, doth still resolve into this, and is comprised under the trial of faith.—ABP. LEIGHTON.

Is he a fire? He'll purge my dross,  
But the true gold sustains no loss;  
Like a refiner shall he sit,  
And tread the refuse with his feet.

DR. WATTS.

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1 PETER, v. 6.

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.

Many have had great and many pressures, one affliction after another, and been humbled, and yet not made humble, as they commonly express the difference: humbled by force, in regard of their outward condition, but not

humbled in their inward temper; and, therefore, as soon as the weight is off, like heaps of wool, they rise up again, and grow as big as they were.

If we would consider this in our particular trials, and aim at this deportment, it were our wisdom. Are they not mad, that, under any stroke, quarrel or struggle against God? What gain your children thus at your hands but more blows? Nor is this only an unseemly and unhappy way, openly to resist and strive, but even secretly to fret and grumble: for he hears the least whispering of the heart, and looks most how that behaves itself under his hand. Oh! humble acceptance of his chastisement is our duty and our peace; that which gains most on the heart of our Father, and makes the rod fall soonest out of his hand.—ABP. LEIGHTON.

“Remember, troubled soul,” says one, “remember well, bitterly humbling winters do make sweet and fruitful summers.”

We are never so much in God’s eye, as when we are least in our own; nor have we ever so much of God, as when we expect little or least from man. Say, therefore, it is well with the righteous, when they are in

the deeps of afflictions; for it is but to bring them off their mountains of pride, that they may be exalted in the strength and love of God.—CARYL.

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## 1 PETER, v. 10.

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered awhile, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

Some may say, "What connexion is there between suffering and glory? Surely, when we are called and justified, we might as well pass immediately into glory, without being tortured in the furnace of affliction. What little dross we have (if we have any) would perhaps have separated of itself, or might have been taken away by a gentle process; and if we were always easy in our circumstances, and our spirits never soured with trouble, we should be fitter to enter into the joy of our Lord." So we are apt to think; but God, who best knows our frame, hath thought and determined otherwise: "Through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom of God," Acts, xiv. 22. "For whom the Lord

loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth," Heb. xii. 6. The iron that is rusty must undergo the file before it can be made bright. The tree that hath many luxuriant shoots, must undergo the pruning knife, that the fruit may have proper nourishment. The sufferer that hath a dangerous wound must undergo very many dressings, and perhaps amputation, that life may be preserved. So must the saints and people of God, (who, with all their circumspection, cannot altogether escape the pollutions which are in the world,) undergo many a fiery trial, before they can be fit for the pure and perfect society and entertainments of heaven. But, since we must suffer, it is a comfort to think that it shall only be for "a while;" indeed, to sense, and an impatient spirit, it may seem a long while; but to faith, that looks more to the things which are unseen and eternal, it will seem a short time.—LAVINGTON.

Cease, ye pilgrims, cease to mourn;  
Press onward to the prize;  
Soon your Saviour will return  
Triumphant in the skies:



Yet a season, and you know  
Happy entrance will be given,  
All your sorrows left below,  
And earth exchanged for heaven.

CENNICK.

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REVELATIONS, iii. 19.

As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.

Christ does not, therefore, love his children because he corrects them, but he therefore corrects them because he loves them. Name the favourite whom God loved too well to strike; nay, commonly there goes the severest exercises where there has been the greatest love. Let not, then, God's chastenings of us abate our love to him; necessity compels God to correct; nothing is done by rods, but what could not be effected without them.—

BURKITT.

Did I meet no trials here,  
No chastisement by the way,  
Might I not with reason fear  
I should prove a cast-away?

Bastards may escape the rod,  
Sunk in earthly vain delight;



But the true born child of God,  
Must not, would not, if he might.

COWPER.

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REVELATIONS, XXI. 4.

And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

The new and blessed state will be free from all trouble and sorrow. All the effects of former trouble shall be done away; God's people have been often before in tears, by reason of sin, of affliction, of the calamities of the church; but now all tears shall be wiped away; no signs, no remembrance of former sorrows shall remain, any further than to make their present felicity the greater: God himself, as their tender Father, with his own kind hand, shall wipe away the tears of his children; and they would not have been without those tears, when God shall come and wipe them away. All the causes of future sorrow shall be for ever removed; there shall be neither death nor pain; and, therefore, no sorrow nor crying: these are things incident to that state in which they were before, but

now all “former things are passed away.”—  
M. HENRY.

Let us learn our obligations to the Redeemer of sinners. Our tears would never have been wiped away, but a miserable life would have been followed by a more miserable eternity, had not he interposed on our behalf, and borne our sins in his own body on the tree. “These are they that came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; therefore, are they before the throne.”

Christians! in the multitude of your thoughts within you, let this comfort delight your souls: Life is the date of all your griefs. If the one be short, the other cannot be long. Not a single tear beyond the grave! Bear up, faith, hope, and patience, a little longer, and the eye shall see evil no more.—JAY.

My soul, this curious house of clay,  
Thy present frail abode,  
Must quickly fall to worms a prey,  
And thou return to God.

Canst thou, by faith, survey with joy  
The change before it come?

And say, "Let death this house destroy,  
I have a heavenly home?"

The Saviour, whom I then shall see  
With new admiring eyes,  
Already has prepared for me  
A mansion in the skies.\*

I feel this mud-wall cottage shake,  
And long to see it fall;  
That I my willing flight may take  
To him who is my all.

Burdened and groaning then no more,  
My rescued soul shall sing,  
As up the shining path I soar,  
"Death, thou hast lost thy sting."

Dear Saviour, help us now to seek,  
And know thy grace's power;  
That we may all this language speak  
Before the dying hour.

\* 2 Corinthians, v. 1.



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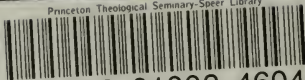
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